



Memory in Action:

Mediatized Public Memory and the Symbolic Construction of Conflict in Student Movements

Lorenzo Zamponi

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences
of the European University Institute

Florence, April, 2015 (submission)

European University Institute
Department of Political and Social Sciences

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Abstract

Cultural factors shape the symbolic environment in which contentious politics take place. Among these factors, collective memories are particularly relevant: they can help collective action by providing symbolic material from the past, but at the same time they can constrain people's ability to mobilise by imposing proscriptions and prescriptions.

In my research I analyse the relationship between social movements and collective memories: how do social movement participate in the building of public memory? And how does public memory, and in particular the media representation of a contentious past, influence the social construction of identity in the contemporary movements?

To answer these questions I focus on the student movements in Italy and Spain, analysing the content and format of media sources in order to draw a map of the different narrative representations of a contentious past, while I use qualitative interviews to investigate their influence on contemporary mobilisations.

In particular, I focus on the evolution of the representation of specific events in the Italian and Spanish student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the different public fields, identifying the role of terrorism and political transitions in shaping in the present the publicly discussed image of the past. The thesis draws on a qualitative content analysis of media material, tracing the phases of the commemoration, putting it in historical context, and attempting to reconstruct the different mechanisms of contentious remembrance. Furthermore, I refer to interviews conducted with contemporary student activists in order to assess the relationship between the public memory of a contentious past and the strategic choices of contemporary movements.

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Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language. Thus Luther put on the mask of the Apostle Paul, the Revolution of 1789-1814 draped itself alternately in the guise of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and the Revolution of 1848 knew nothing better to do than to parody, now 1789, now the revolutionary tradition of 1793-95. In like manner, the beginner who has learned a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he assimilates the spirit of the new language and expresses himself freely in it only when he moves in it without recalling the old and when he forgets his native tongue.

(K. Marx 1852 The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte)

To articulate what is past does not mean to recognize 'how it really was.' It means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger. For historical materialism it is a question of holding fast to a picture of the past, just as if it had unexpectedly thrust itself, in a moment of danger, on the historical subject. The danger threatens the stock of tradition as much as its recipients. For both it is one and the same: handing itself over as the tool of the ruling classes. In every epoch, the attempt must be made to deliver tradition anew from the conformism which is on the point of overwhelming it. For the Messiah arrives not merely as the Redeemer; he also arrives as the vanquisher of the Anti-christ. The only writer of history with the gift of setting alight the sparks of hope in the past, is the one who is convinced of this: that not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

(W. Benjamin 1940 On the Concept of History)

Part 1 - Introduction, theoretical framework and methods

Chapter 1- Introduction

On December 14th 2010, I participated in a massive demonstration in Rome against the university reform, in the occasion of the vote of confidence towards the Berlusconi government in the senate. After the news that prime minister Silvio Berlusconi had unexpectedly managed to obtain the majority (convincing some of the senators who had split from the party in previous weeks to return – with arguments that are still under investigation by the judiciary system), the demonstration escalated into limited but violent clashes with the police that guarded the ‘red zone’ of the city centre. At the end of the demonstration, a friend and fellow activist showed me the webpage of *La Repubblica* (Italy’s most important – traditionally progressive – newspaper) on his smartphone: the headline can be translated as something like ‘Guerrillas in Rome. It’s the new ‘77’, a clear reference to a year that was characterised by radical and sometimes violent protests that, as we will see, have often been connected, in the Italian public memory, to terrorism.

A few days later, I received a phone call from a local newspaper in Padua, the seat of the university from which I had graduated two years earlier, telling me that somebody had recognised me on a news programme and that they wanted to quote me in an article about the participation of Paduan students in the demonstration. ‘Of course’, I answered, ‘who else will you interview?’ When I heard the names, I was stunned. Their choices, to report on an event involving thousands of young men and women born in the late 80s and early 90s, were Luca Casarini, a 43-year-old veteran of the Venetian social centres, mostly famous for his role during the anti-G8 protest in Genoa in 2001, and Pietro Calogero, a 71-year-old retired public prosecutor, who, in 1979, ordered the arrest of Toni Negri and other leaders of *Autonomia Operaia*, charging a significant number of the most radical activists of the 1977 protests with terrorism and armed insurrection. The chance to explain the students’ critique of the university reform, or the activists’ point of view on what happened in the streets and in the parliament clearly did not exist. The main issue, once again, was the return of the violence and terrorism of the 1970s, implying a seamless continuity between the kidnapping and killing of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades in 1978 and the (almost completely non-violent) protests against the ‘Gelmini reform’ in 2010.

This anecdote is just one from a long list of personal experiences that drive my interest in the

peculiar relationship between social movements and collective memories. Studying in Padua, a city in which the 30th anniversary of the arrests of 1979 was marked by competing books, events, and commemorations by different political actors with conflicting interpretations of those stories, certainly played a role. But the presence of the past, and in particular of the cumbersome memory of the 1960s and 1970s, is something that everyone who participates in collective action in Italy has to face, sooner or later.

In this thesis, I try to come to terms with this presence through the tools of social science. In particular, I aim at illuminating some of the most relevant aspects of the relationship between social movements and collective memories, using concepts and analytical instruments of the different fields, in the attempt to help broaden the scholarship and contribute to the social knowledge of these phenomena.

In fact, the social and scholarly relevance of the relationship between movements and memories are deeply intertwined. The media depictions of the most relevant episodes of protest of the last few years, of which the superficial grouping of the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and the European anti-austerity mobilisations is the most visible example, tend to flatten out in the present, losing the perspective of historical trajectories, evolving genealogies, and cultural continuities. A rhetoric of newness, spontaneity and techno-enthusiasm, describing unorganised and unpoliticised masses of individuals that are threatening the global political and economic order thanks to their easy access to social media on their mobile phones, has been dominating the public discourse on the most recent episodes of mobilisation. This is thwarting our ability to really understand such complex and long-term processes. These narratives, other than being potentially misleading for researchers, tend to ‘unwittingly (or not) deny agency to social movement networks and actors’ (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 2), thus favouring a depoliticised and confused representation of collective action, which is easy to exploit for those actors interested in doing so.

Similar concerns also characterise the recent academic debate on social movements. In fact, the goal of accounting for agency, giving back to movement actors the keys of their action, has been one of the core issues in social movement studies in the last ten years. In particular, the focus on strategic choices and on the symbolic and cultural factors influencing them and shaping the environment in which they are made, has been one of the major approaches among social researchers in the attempt to bridge the divide between structure and agency and to investigate these relationships in a dynamic way. This collective enterprise aims to account for

the role of actors, their composition, their choices, and their backgrounds, in a complex environment in which discursive and symbolic traits are being increasingly investigated, as well as the processes that shape them.

It is in this context, in particular through the widespread interest in the construction of collective identities and the symbolic dimension of collective action, that collective memory entered the study of social movements. Since the so-called ‘cultural turn’ of social movement studies, the interest towards collective memory and, in particular, its relationship with political contention, has been steadily growing among scholars working on cases of participation and conflict. In the last few years, memory studies, and in particular the sociology of memory based on the seminal work of Maurice Halbwachs, has become a fundamental tool for the development of research on social movements. In particular, the literature on memory has proved increasingly able to provide useful insights into the symbolic construction of the reality in which collective action takes place; interpreting memory not as a mere mirror of past events but as the result of collective practices that are able to offer insights into current ways of interpreting reality. On the other hand, the scholarship on memory has increasingly interiorised pluralistic, dynamic and contentious models and explanations, evolving from the approach rooted in the Durkheimian tradition towards a ‘sociology of mnemonic practices’ (Olick and Robbins 1999). My familiarity with this line of work, and in particular with the study of the effect of mediatisation on mnemonic processes¹, pushed me to try to apply and rethink these models in terms of their relationship with a dynamic and contentious field, such as that of social movements.

The aim of this thesis is twofold: on the one hand, I will analyse the representation of contentious pasts in the public memory, identifying actors, processes and changes; and on the other hand, I will assess the influence of these representations on contemporary mobilisation, in particular on the strategic choices of contemporary activists in the context of the student movements that have animated Italy and Spain in the last few years.

Cultural factors play a role in structuring the symbolic environment in which contentious politics take place. Among these factors, collective memories are particularly relevant: memory

¹ In 2008 I defended in the University of Padua a master thesis titled *I circuiti della memoria: giornali, tv e la narrazione delle foibe 1946-2007* (‘The circuits of memory: press, TV and the narrative of foibe 1946-2007’), that reconstructed the controversial representations in the Italian media of a series of massacres on the border between Italy and Yugoslavia during the Second World War.

can help collective action by drawing on symbolic material from the past, but at the same time it can constrain people's ability to mobilise, by imposing proscriptions and prescriptions. In my research I analyse the relationship between social movements and collective memories: how do social movements participate in the building of public memory? And how does public memory, and in particular the media representations of a contentious past, influence the social construction of identity in contemporary movements?

To answer these questions, I focus on the student movement in Italy and Spain and analyse the content and format of media sources in order to map out the different representations of a contentious past. Qualitative interviews to activists allow me to investigate the influence of these representations on contemporary mobilisations. In particular, I focus on the evolution of the representation of specific events in the Italian and Spanish student movements of the 60s and 70s in different public fields, identifying the role of terrorism and political transitions in shaping the present publicly discussed image of the past. The thesis draws on a qualitative content analysis of media material, tracing the phases of commemoration, putting it in historical context and aiming at reconstructing the different mechanisms of contentious remembrance. Furthermore, I refer to interviews with contemporary student activists, assessing the relationship between the public memory of a contentious past and the strategic choices of contemporary movements. The main idea behind this research design is to identify the main representations of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the media, and then to compare them with the representations of the past shared by current student activists. This allows me to analyse analogies and differences between media representations and activists' memories and, thus, to assess the impact of the media in the construction of the memory of the 1960s and 1970s in current social movements. Furthermore, I use interviews to activists to identify occasions in which symbolic references to the past play a role in shaping the strategic choices of the movement.

The thesis is divided into three parts: Part 1 is dedicated to the introduction (Chapter 1), the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and the description of methods and cases (Chapter 3); Part 2 is dedicated to the representations of the 1960s and 1970s in the media forum of the public sphere, in Italy (Chapter 4) and in Spain (Chapter 5); Part 3 is dedicated to the relationship between mnemonic practices, collective identities and strategic choices in contemporary student movements, involving the analysis of the forms of memory (Chapter 6), its contents and sources (Chapter 7) and its influence on strategic choices (Chapter 8).

In the second chapter, I present the theoretical framework of this work, tracing its conceptual roots in the literature on social movements and on collective memory. I describe the contentious field of public memory, the processes of symbolic construction of conflict, and the role of the media as an arena of public memory, as well as identifying the factors the role of which I will aim to illustrate in the rest of the thesis. In the third chapter, I illustrate the methods, cases, and research design.

In the fourth chapter, I present a map of public memory of the Italian ‘long ‘68’, examining the evolutions and changes of the representations of two contentious events of the Italian student movements of the 1960s and 1970s – the ‘Battle of Valle Giulia’ and the ‘Chase of Lama’ – in the most important Italian newspapers. In the fifth chapter I repeat this exercise for the Spanish context, analysing the trajectories of the representations of the ‘Capuchinada’ and of the death of Enrique Ruano.

Part 3 is structured borrowing a typology from linguistics, distinguishing between syntax (the forms of memory), semantics (the relationship between memories and the past to which they refer) and pragmatics (the use of memory in action). In the sixth chapter, I analyse the presence of memories in the interviews of contemporary student activists in Italy and Spain, proposing a typology of the different forms of memory,

In the seventh chapter, I describe the relationship between the actors and different narratives of the past, proposing the concepts of *repertoires of memory* and *repository of memory* as analytical tools to investigate mnemonic processes.

In the eight chapter, I examine the different ways in which memory influences, both as a resource and as a constraint, the movements’ strategic choices. In particular, I identify a set of strategic choices that memories (both implicit and explicit, and both as a resource and as a constraint) pose to social movement actors. The ninth chapter summarises the main finding of this thesis and proposes directions for further research.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework

1. Conceptual roots

Collective memory entered the study of social movements largely due to the widespread interest in the social construction of collective identities and the symbolic dimension of collective action, which has been typical of the most recent scholarship on social movements (Polletta and Jasper 2001).

In this context, memory studies, and in particular the sociology of memory based on the seminal work of Maurice Halbwachs, has become a fundamental tool of the current research on social movements. This relationship also works the other way around: the scholarship on contentious politics has been a model for the study of contention in the field of memory (Jansen 2007).

The common definition of collective memory as the set of symbols and practices referring to the past that are shared by a community of people (e.g. Jedlowski 1987, Zelizer 1995, Olick and Levy 1997, Kansteiner 2002, Aguilar 2003, 2008, Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser & Sztompka 2004, Rampazi and Tota 2005, 2007 Aguilar 2008, among others), has required researchers to acknowledge the problem of pluralism: different communities refer to different sets of symbols and practices, and the same individual can belong to more than one group, thus developing a multi-level identity based on different mnemonic practices. This line of work has challenged the notion of a monolithic, shared memory linked to the national identity (Habermas 1987, Hobsbawm & Ranger 1994, Gallerano 1995, Anderson 1996), questioning the idea of memory as something that is able to unify the social imaginary and, instead, proposing a set of definitions that can account for the intrinsic pluralism of memory. Thus, *collective memory* is now defined as the memory shared by a particular community or group; *social memory* as the memory spread across the entire society; and *public memory* as that part of the latter which refers to the public sphere (Tota 1997, Jedlowski 2007).

Most scholars now recognise that there is a strong link between collective memory and group identity (Olick & Robbins 1998), both in local communities and in social organisations. Collective memory has a regulatory function: it defines, through its mechanisms of selection

and removal, the boundaries of a group's membership and the plausibility and relevance criteria for the group identity. 'In this process of common rebuilding of the past, people learn what must be remembered and what forgotten, how and why it must be remembered or rather given to oblivion, thanks to mechanisms of selection that permit at the same time to shape a specific representation of the past and to make it an essential instrument of membership'. These *mechanisms* are the ones that generate 'the great social power of this memory, its capacity to make plans for the future while it is inviting to glance at the past' (Leccardi 1997: 11-13; see also Bourdieu 1993).

In this way, the idea of collective memory as a 'living bond of generations' (Halbwachs 1987: 74) implies a social production of memory through the symbolic practices of a group. On the other hand, the role of memory in defining identity does not work only inside groups, but also in the public sphere. Thus, we can talk of contentious memory, a field where different groups clash because every actor proposes their own narrative of the past, which is strictly tied to their own collective identity and to the future that every group imagines (Jedlowski 1987, Leccardi 1997).

Conflict is a structural condition of this field, and involves the set of symbolic resources of a society, the social legitimation that the use of these resources grants, and the opportunities that a group has to access the material means of cultural production (Leccardi 1997).

In the 21st century, it is impossible to deal with public memory without placing the practices of remembrance in the context of a mediatised public space, in which the media, as a 'master arena' of public discourse (Gamson 2004: 243), is the main repository of social representations of the past from which people can draw from in the present (Dayan & Catz 1992, Gamson 1995, Cavalli 2005, Jedlowski 2005, Zelizer 2008).

In our complex societies today, mediatised public memory can be represented as a field in which different narratives compete according to specific cultural, social, political, and commercial interests (Jedlowski 1987, Ortoleva 1995). Public memory, as 'the publicly discussed image of the past' (Jedlowski 2005: XIV), is thus a fundamental feature in the definition of the criteria of plausibility and relevance in the entire public sphere.

The analysis of public memory, to be comprehensive, must involve those actors participating in the public sphere. And social movements cannot be ignored. Mario Diani has defined these

as ‘networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups or associations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity’ (Diani 2003: 301). Thus, there are three dimensions that distinguish a movement from other processes such as coalitions: (1) a collective action involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; (2) dense informal exchanges between entities engaged in collective projects; and (3) the presence of a collective identity (della Porta and Diani 2006). Many scholars have shown the relevance of the third dimension (collective identity) in the formation of a social movement (Touraine 1981, Pizzorno 1996, Melucci 1996). Collective identity is considered as a strategic device for both the setting of borders for the group membership and as the motivation for action. It links the actors to each other, it provides patterns for the individual reasons for joining the movement and develops a collective consciousness which often goes even beyond the problem originating the conflict (Polletta and Jasper 2001, della Porta and Diani 2006).

The construction of the collective identity of a group is a dynamic process, which needs to be continually reproduced and reinforced, through the use of specific symbols, practices and rituals (Melucci 1996, Leccardi 1997). Many scholars have worked on the identity-building process of social movements in the last decade, and some of them have referred to the use, by activists, of ‘evocative cultural symbols, resonating with the ones belonging to the potential members, to motivate them to collective action’ (Valocchi 2005: 54), in order to build frames (Snow and Benford 1988, Snow & McAdam 2000, Johnston and Noakes 2005) that can help people to interpret an event or situation and place it in a wider meaning system. Indeed, what could ‘resonate’ better, in the consciousness of a group member, than symbols related to his/her own memory and to the group’s memory? This process is mostly evident in nationalist movements, whose symbols and myths ‘are probably those most explicitly rooted in historical experience’ (della Porta & Diani 2006: 107). Yet memory can be seen as a strategic feature in the identity building of many other kinds of social movements. Nevertheless, an in-depth analysis of the role of memory in the identity building processes of social movements has yet to be done. As Francesca Polletta and James Jasper highlighted: ‘[w]e still know little about the cultural building blocks that are used to construct collective identities. Laws and political status have been studied as a source, but we should learn more about how intellectuals and group leaders use nostalgia and other elements of collective memory to construct a past for a group’ (Polletta and Jasper 2001: 299).

2. The contentious field of public memory and the symbolic construction of conflict

In a famous article, Jeffrey K. Olick (1999) described the two main approaches that had characterised memory studies since the beginning: the individualistic perspective – based on psychology – that considers collective memory as an ‘aggregation of socially framed individual memories’ and focuses on ‘neurological and cognitive factors’; and the collectivistic perspective, which is rooted in the Durkheimian sociological tradition and ‘refers to collective phenomena *sui generis*’, emphasising ‘the social and cultural patternings of public and personal memory’ (Olick 1999: 333). This distinction between *collected* and *collective* memory, as Olick explains, is based on two very dissimilar perceptions of culture. There is ‘one that sees culture as a subjective category of meanings contained in people’s minds’, and ‘one that sees culture as patterns of publicly available symbols objectified in society’ (Olick 1999: 336). As a sociologist, I find myself drawn to the second concept, which focuses on ‘public discourses about the past as wholes’ and on ‘narratives and images of the past that speak in the name of collectivities’, in order to resist the temptation of methodological individualism and ‘sociobiological reductionism’ and to defend the relevance of the historical context (Olick 1999: 345). Nevertheless, I find Olick’s attempt to synthesise the two approaches in the construction of a new ‘historical sociology of mnemonic practices’ to be particularly important (Olick & Robbins 1998: 105), especially as it is able to take into account both public and private contexts and factors, and to remember that ‘an infinity of social and neural networks are constantly in play with each other, meaning that different kinds of structures are always relevant and that their relevance is always changing’ (Olick 1999: 346).

The debate proposed by Olick is situated in the so-called ‘new political culture’ perspective, which calls for a new interest in the role of culture in politics and in particular in the ‘symbolic structuring of political discourse’ (Olick 1999: 337).

The role of culture in politics is also being discussed in social movement studies: in their polemical essay questioning the ‘structural bias’ of the mainstream paradigm in social movement studies, Jasper and Goodwin pointed out that ‘we need a better appreciation of the symbolism of events and individuals, so that we can see how they discourage or encourage political action’ and listed among their ‘modest proposals’ the acknowledgment that ‘culture permeates the political opportunities and mobilizing structures’ (Goodwin and Jasper 2004a: 3-30).

In that debate and on other occasions, Francesca Polletta called for a different conceptualisation of culture, as ‘the symbolic dimension of all structures, institutions, and practices (political, economic, educational, etc.)’ (Polletta 2004: 100). This proposal is part of a shared effort in the recent social movement scholarship to shed light on some aspects of social movements that have traditionally been underestimated, like emotions (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001) or storytelling (Fine 1995, Tilly 2002, Polletta 2006), which are usually linked with the identity building process (Fine 1998, Polletta & Jasper 2001, Tilly 2002, della Porta & Diani 2006).

Every contentious dynamic, from this point of view, implies a process in which the identity of a group is a social construction based on the traits that make the members of that group part of a common ‘we’ and different from ‘them’. Some scholars define this process as the symbolic construction of conflict (della Porta & Piazza 2008), and external cultural factors certainly play an important role, structuring the symbolic environment in which it takes place.

Among these factors, ‘collective memories’ (Polletta 2004: 100-101) and ‘protest traditions’ (Morris 2004: 243-245) are particularly relevant. As Polletta pointed out in her attempt to explain the cultural dimension of structural opportunities, ‘these traditions, principles, codes and arrangements cannot easily be “thought away” by insurgents. They are supra-individual and constrain individual action’. (Polletta 2004: 101) This last point is often underestimated: memory can help collective action (Harris 2006) by producing opportunities from the symbolic material of the past (Polletta and Jasper 2001), but, at the same time, it can also constrain people's ability to mobilise by imposing proscriptions (taboos and prohibitions) and prescriptions (duties and requirements) (Olick and Levy 1997).

This perspective implies pluralism and conflict in the field of public memory as well as in the identity building process. The contentious nature of memory (Tota 1997) and the dynamic definition of identity (Polletta and Jasper 2001, della Porta and Diani 2006) are now acknowledged by most of the scholarship. Memory, as identity, is a pluralistic field. There can be no such thing, for instance, as ‘the memory’ of a movement. There are many narratives, some of which are made by the movement itself, dealing with the symbols and practices related to the movement (Jedlowski 2007). Identity can be self- or hetero-defined, but even this distinction is too simple. It is a social process involving a plurality of actors, none of which (usually) can completely control the results of the process (Ortoleva 1995, Jedlowski 2005), and each of which has to deal with the ‘existing cultural material’ (Tonello 2005: 118, Zhang

and Schwartz 2003).

The field of public memory is structured by the conflict between different narratives of the past, each one aiming at hegemony. This conflict is not a sterile confrontation between different traditions, but a struggle for a group's position within the public sphere. If memory is strategic for setting the criteria of plausibility and relevance, then the narrative that succeeds in imposing itself can grant legitimacy and symbolic power in the public sphere. 'The public dimension of past is a resource of privilege, for whose definition different social and institutional actors compete in the public arena' (Rampazi and Tota 2007: 12). From this point of view, the common notion of 'distortion' does not make any sense. As Michael Schudson argues: '[d]istortion is inevitable. Memory is distortion since memory is invariably and inevitably selective. A way of seeing is a way of not seeing, a way of remembering is a way of forgetting, too. If memory were only a kind of registration, a 'true' memory might be possible. But memory is a process of encoding information, storing information, and strategically retrieving information, and there are social, psychological, and historical influences at each point' (Schudson 1997b: 348). The goal of the social researcher, therefore, is to analyse the processes of distortion that constitute memory in order to identify the recurring mechanisms and agents involved in them. This distortion is sometimes part of a specific cultural and political project, while it is often the result of a complex interaction between different factors, involving agents that have their own interests and goals. Collective memory is thus 'as much a result of conscious manipulation as unconscious absorption and it is always mediated' (Kansteiner 2002: 180).

Therefore, there is 'an important differentiation between potential and actual cultural memories' (Kansteiner 2002: 182). Very few mnemonic projects reach their goal and stake out a relevant position in the field of public memory (Schudson 1997a): memory processes 'involve individual agency' but they are 'based in a society and its inventory of signs and symbols' (Kansteiner 2002: 188). From this point of view, given that 'most stories about the past, even those designed for fame as future collective memories, never make it beyond the group of a few initiated' (Kansteiner 2002: 193), the analysis of cases of "failed" collective memory' (Kansteiner 2002: 192) might be useful in order to understand the factors determining the success or failure of a mnemonic project. To clarify, here I use 'mnemonic project' and 'memory process' to refer to two different phenomena: the former is a conscious attempt to promote a narrative; the latter involves the whole set of mechanisms at work in the career of the narrative, able to determine its success or failure. A memory process often involves more

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than a mnemonic project, and its outcomes are the result of a complex interaction of different factors.

If we conceptualise public memory as a field, then the success of a narrative is the conquest of a relative position of power towards others. Therefore, the outcome of a memory process can be assessed only in relation to the field. We can see whether the attempt to promote a collective memory in the mediatised public sphere is successful by examining the discursive content of the public sphere, and by looking at the frequency and the position of the symbolic traits that characterise that narrative. Discourse analysis can offer a set of very useful tools for this endeavour, as I will explain later.

But the outcome of a memory process does not end in the field of public memory. The latter, in fact, is a relevant factor in the cultural context in which social conflict takes place, contributing to the process of symbolic construction of conflict. Thus, collective memories that manage to reach a powerful position in the field play an important role in structuring the symbolic environment in which contemporary social movements act.

Therefore, the success or failure of a mnemonic project can also be assessed through the analysis of contemporary social movements, namely by trying to identify the cleavages that the public representations of the past impose on activists and their actions.

The pattern I am trying to draw, using the example of social movements, aims at pointing out what is missing in collective memory studies: while there is a strong and developed literature on official state-controlled memory (Olick 2003) and on resisting popular memory (Popular Memory Group 1982, Passerini 1988, Aguilar 2008), there is very little research addressing what happens in the middle. If public memory is plural and contentious, involving the participation of different narratives proposed by different actors with different strategies, then how does the process of memory building work? Which actors are likely to succeed in imposing their narrative? Which mechanisms determine their outcomes, and why, or, at least, under which conditions? And how does this process influence the identity building process of contemporary actors active in the same field?

At the same time, and as mentioned above, social movements act in a symbolically constructed world, and public memory is an important part of that. They are, therefore, a peculiar case of social actors whose relationship with memory can be examined in both directions: social movements can be analysed as mnemonic agents in the arena of public memory, competing with other narrative-bearing actors, and collective memories can be studied as a strategic

feature in the building of a group's identity.

3. The media as the arena of public memory

This research will bridge the literature on social movements and on public memory, acknowledging the fundamental role of the media as an arena for the battle of memory.

My approach focuses on the social practices² that make memory, analysing their mechanisms of selection and removal. Paolo Jedlowski describes a model in which ‘the collective memory represented by the common conscience of these societies reflects effectively the result of a clash in which the relationships of power between different groups are critical’ (Jedlowski 1987: 29-30). On the other hand, the arena of public memory has its own rules, and its processes define the criteria of plausibility and relevance that all narratives must respect in order to be reliable (Jedlowski 2007).

It is important to focus not only on the objects of memory (books, media products, etc.), but also on the processes³ of their production and on the power conflicts they imply. These processes are the objects of the sociological study of memory (Olick and Robbins 1998).

As Kansteiner wrote, ‘memories are always mediated phenomena. All memories, even the memories of eyewitnesses, only assume collective relevance when they are structured, represented, and used in a social setting. As a result, the means of representation that facilitate this process provide the best information about the evolution of collective memories, especially as we try to reconstruct them after the fact’ (Kansteiner 2002: 190).

The media, and in particular the discursive material that it produces, is relevant to the analysis of public memory for similar reasons to those that makes it interesting for social movement studies. The role of the media, in fact, is fundamental in framing and shaping the identity of a

² Here, I define ‘practices’ according to the so-called ‘theory of social practices’, which sees them as ‘a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, “things” and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge’. This behaviour ‘forms so to speak a “block” whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements. Likewise, a practice represents a pattern which can be filled out by a multitude of single and often unique actions reproducing the practice. [...] A practice is thus a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood.’ (Reckwitz 2002: 249-250).

³ ‘Processes are regular sequences of [...] mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements.’ (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2001: 24).

movement (Gamson 1995), often using a narrative format (Barkin 1984) that is considered the most natural format of contemporary media (Bird and Dardenne 1988).

Therefore, the capacity to adapt to a narrative format is a central resource for a mnemonic project to succeed in the field of public memory, as is access to the audience for a social movement. This format is not artificially created by the media, but comes from a tradition of 'narrative conventions'. In turn, 'such media-shaped perceptions may then become part of the common cultural framework, to be drawn on again by journalists in a continuing dialectical process' (Bird and Dardenne 1988: 82).

In particular, the media representations of social movements are fundamental in shaping the public sphere, given the 'overall prevalence of social conflicts in television news' (Cohen, Adoni and Bantz 1990: 176). Furthermore, social conflict is more likely than other social phenomena to be represented 'in relationship to other conflict items, [...] connected to other events' and provided with a 'historical background and context'. In conclusion, 'news items dealing with social conflict' are 'often connected with one another and presented within a historical context' (Cohen, Adoni and Bantz 1990: 177).

The role of the media in the field of public memory (Gallerano 1995, McQuail 1996, Edy 1999, Zelizer 2008), as well as the use of the past in order to contextualise present events by the media (Cohen, Adoni and Bantz 1990, Edy 2006, Zelizer 2008), have been acknowledged by many scholars, while more work needs to be done to understand how the mnemonic repertoires to which the media refer are built, how the media work reshapes the memory it uses and how these processes influence and constrain the public action of present social actors. Furthermore, the research has mainly focused on the memory of single events, like March on Washington (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles 2000) or Yithzak Rabin's assassination (Peri 1999). In this research I will refer to some key concepts in the contemporary sociological debate, including: narratives (Polletta 1998), commemorative genres (Tota 1997) and cultural trauma (Eyerman 2001, Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, & Sztopka 2004, Eyerman 2007), in order to identify the role of collective memories in the development of social movements and the function of social movements in the shaping of public memory.

Scholars have acknowledged memory among the factors involved in social contention (Harris 2006, Polletta 2006, Meyer 2006), but more work needs to be done, in particular with regard to the influence of the representation of past social movements in the collective identities

developed by contemporary movements.

This process involves movements with both a passive and an active role: the past, in particular the memory of past social movements, is the lens used by the media to analyse and represent every movement (Edy 2006), and the movements participate in the construction of this lens, strategically choosing the representation of the past that is most valuable to their goals.

Memory is at the same time an outcome of protest and a tool in constructing new mobilisations, and in the last few years the active role of social movements in the processes that lead to the construction of public memory as a symbolic environment has been acknowledged: an event, to become relevant in the field of public memory, needs 'social appropriation' (Harris 2006: 19). Collective memory is not the automatic outcome of protest, but the result of a specific 'memory work' (Jansen 2007: 953). It depends on various factors, among these, Armstrong and Cragge have identified the 'commemorability' of an event, the 'mnemonic capacity' of a movement, the 'resonance' in the audience produced by the chosen 'commemorative form' and the potential for the 'institutionalization' of that form (Armstrong and Cragge 2006: 726-727), providing the bases for an analytical model aiming to explain why and how a specific event has success in being socially remembered.

Movements can challenge the hegemonic representation of their antecedents, as reported by the media, or distance themselves from them. A movement can adopt old symbols, traditionally far from its identity, and charge them with new meanings (Fantasia and Hirsch 1995). Likewise, an episode from the past can become part of a new narrative (Jansens 2007). The contemporary debate in the field is focused, among other topics, on the limits of this memory work. How manipulable is the past? Recent studies have challenged the most radically constructionist assumptions, underlining the path-dependency of memory work and the limited malleability of the historical material (Spillman 1998), while calling for a strategic approach, able to take in to account the 'limited set of symbolic conditions that both constrain and enable particular options for memory work' (Jansen 2007: 993). An analysis of these mechanisms could be very useful for understanding how the relationship between social movements and collective memory works, revealing the results of the movements' work as mnemonic agents and the consequence of this process on the symbolic construction of contemporary conflict.

To continue on this road, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary. I will draw on social movement theory, especially for its focus on collective identity and on the role of narratives

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(Meyer 2006, Polletta 2006), and, in general, of the past (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, and Sztompka 2004), and I will draw on history, especially on works new possible interactions between history and memory (Assmann 2008, De Luna 2004, De Luna 2009). Finally, I will need media studies, to investigate how the media criteria influence the success of a memory narrative in the public sphere (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, Edy 2006, Couldry 2008, Zelizer 2008).

Chapter 3 - Methods, cases, and research design

The goal of this thesis is to explore the relationship between social movements and collective memories in order to contribute to answering two main questions: how do social movements participate in the building of public memory? And how does public memory, and in particular the media representations of a contentious past, influence contemporary collective action?

In the previous chapter I have shown that contemporary memory studies lack an established theoretical framework that is able to offer a definite set of operationalisable hypotheses, and is instead made up by a wide range of different pieces of research, each underlining an individual factor, and usually strongly rooted in a particular historical context. For these reasons, the scope of this thesis is primarily exploratory, in the attempt to identify, through case-study analysis, the processes and mechanisms of memory in relationship to social movements and to propose a theoretical framework able to account for them.

I consider appropriate for my purpose a small number of cases, that allow me, with a quasi-ethnographic depth of analysis, to examine the interactions among the different factors and to draw some patterns, to identify the relationship between these factors, the mechanisms in which they are involved and the historical contexts, and to lay the foundations for further generalisation.

Therefore, my research design is structured around a case-based comparison, involving a small number of cases (two), that have been selected through a conscious choice and ‘analysed based on a large number of characteristics’ (della Porta 2008: 202) that I will describe in this chapter. The choice of two national cases (the student movements in Italy and Spain) hopes to offer ‘an intimacy of analysis that is almost never available to large-N analysis’, and ‘draws on – and indeed insists on – deep background knowledge of the countries being examined’ and ‘facilitates [...] causal-process analysis’ (Tarrow 2010: 243).

1. Media content analysis

The fourth and fifth chapters of the thesis offer an analysis of the representation of past social conflicts in contemporary media. I have examined media content concerning social movements

and episodes of contention of the past decades in order to identify the most powerful narratives of which contemporary public memory on this issue consists.

The method I used for this purpose is partially inspired by the tradition of qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2000, Berg 2001, Hsie and Shannon 2005, Elo and Kingas 2008, Schreier 2012), in the sense that it aims at systematically investigating the content of media texts. Nevertheless, I decided not to use the structured content analysis methodology based on coding techniques that are typical of most content analyses, but, instead, to undertake a thorough qualitative examination of texts in their complexity. Thus, I conducted an in-depth qualitative analysis of the texts that I obtained through a small-n sampling.

In particular, I chose, both in the Italian and in the Spanish case, two relevant events related to the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s and I searched for references to them, using specific keywords, in the digital archives of three mainstream newspapers in each country. The sample I obtained is shown in tables in which I illustrate the number of references found for each year, reconstructing a first sketch of the evolution of the ways in which these events are remembered.

I also decided not to code the texts that I obtained (differently to what most qualitative content analysis methodologies suggest), but, instead, to read them one by one and to qualitatively identify, using my own judgement as a researcher, the different narratives that were produced and reproduced in time, and to present these to the reader – referring to all the relevant articles and citing the most salient examples. I am aware of the drawbacks of this approach, which could be open to problems of external validity given that this is a methodology that is already considered more descriptive and geared towards understanding than it is towards explanation. Nevertheless, I consider this the right methodological choice for this part of my work, which has, in fact, mainly descriptive goals. In fact, I do not argue, in chapters four and five, for a reconstruction of generalisable models, but, instead, I identify completely context-specific narratives and their evolution, that later, in Chapter 7, will be compared with the representations of the past proposed by contemporary activists. In-depth analysis of a text, and looking at recurring narratives, reciprocal interactions and their evolution, is not new in social movement studies as, for example, Francesca Polletta's work (2006) illustrates. The context-specific and contingent purpose of this part of my thesis makes it in some way closer to historiography than sociology. This obviously reflects on the methods, and in fact I have tried to exercise both the 'source criticism' and the constant and transparent reference to the sources that are typical of

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historical research.

In chapters 4 and 5 I use the concept of the public sphere for reasons of clarity and brevity. Nevertheless, I take into account the critiques and revisions that this concept has been subjected to in the field of media studies over the last two decades: some of them have accounted for its lack of neutrality, excessive rationalism, exclusion of household and economy and monism (Garnham 1992); some have denounced the fragmentation of the contemporary public sphere (Gitlin 1998); some have described how the public orientation of the individual interacts with media consumption (Couldry and Markham 2008) and have called for more attention towards the spaces of dissent which challenge the borders of the public sphere (Couldry and Curran 2003); and some have proposed the concept of the ‘media environment’, which is more ‘open, unpredictable’, ‘controversial’, ‘fluid’ and ‘dynamic’ (Mattoni 2009). Furthermore, as Kansteiner pointed out, the field of memory studies has much to learn from media studies with regard to the role of audiences in the communication processes (Livingstone 1993, Kansteiner 2002, Livingstone 2004). In particular, in Part 3, I refer to the pluralistic model of public sphere proposed by Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, and Rucht (2002).

These considerations are reflected in the choice of the sources. The media data to be examined depends on the cases, and the specific selection is discussed in each chapter. Here, I mention some general guidelines, based on the literature (Cavallari 1990, Mc Quail 1996), to explain why I chose to focus primarily on mainstream independent commercial newspapers. The main reason is the level of public legitimacy that they have and can give (Cavallari 1990).

Throughout this analysis I follow the paths of the different ‘interpretive packages’ (Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 2) on past social conflicts, from their origins to the present, reconstructing the traits that constitute these ‘packages’, comparing them with the narratives produced by the movements, and identifying the different agents that participate in the public memory building process, their strategies, and the outcomes of these strategies.

I focus on public memory as a whole, constituted by the interaction among the different narratives in the media arena, and on the eventual survival of different collective memories, linked to specific social groups, in marginal parts of the field.

2. Interviews with contemporary activists

In chapters 6, 7 and 8 I focus on contemporary movements, using in-depth interviews, and

aiming to identify the mechanisms of influence between the media representation of the past and its use in collective action. In particular, I reconstruct, from the activists' own words, the strategies they use in order to carry the burden of the past and whether memory is a resource or a hindrance for their collective action.

In fact, while media content analysis is a good way to examine the public behaviour of social movements in relation with the symbolic environment that public memory contributes to build, it can tell us very little about what happens on the side of agency, in particular about the strategies chosen by activists and the meaning they attach to these experiences. Qualitative interviews, instead, 'allow scrutiny of meaning, both how activists regard their participation and how they understand their social world', 'bring human agency to the center of movement analysis' and 'generate representations that embody the subjects' voices, minimizing, at least as much as possible, the voice of the researcher' (Blee and Taylor 2002: 95-96).

My interviewees were selected from among the student activists that have taken part in the mobilisations in the Italian and Spanish universities between 2008 and today. I aimed to select individuals that 'have different levels of activism and participation in different factions of a movement' (Blee and Taylor 2002: 100).

From the methodological, epistemological, and ethical point of view, two main issues needed particular care when conducting the interviews: on the one hand, how to deal with my long personal experience of militancy in the Italian student movement that I investigate, and, on the other hand, how to allow memory to emerge from the interviews, partially relying on the activists' reflexivity, without delegating to them my investigation, but being able to distinguish between data and analysis. In the following section I will address the latter issue, while section 4 of this chapter will be dedicated to the former.

2.1 Memory in located memory texts

How can collective memories be traced in individuals? And how does memory emerge from interviews? Epistemological and methodological issues are deeply intertwined in this regard, especially since my work is based on an intersubjective, relational, and structural conceptualisation of culture as something that 'is not just in your head':

We can conceptualize culture differently. Think of it as the symbolic dimension of all structures,

institutions and practices (political, economic, educational, etc.). Symbols are signs that have meaning and significance through their interrelations; the pattern of those relations is culture. Culture is thus patterned and patterning; it is enabling as well as constraining; and it is observable in linguistic practices, institutional rules and social rituals rather than existing only in people's heads. (Polletta 2004: 100)

If we want to understand collective memories, which are part of an intersubjective culture located in social practices, then how can this phenomenon be traced through individual interviews?

Interviews, and especially the choice of establishing a direct dialogue with activists, has traditionally proved to be a highly useful tool for addressing the symbolic aspects of collective action and, in particular, the processes of meaning-construction, rooted in the institutionalised practice of social movement research (Blee and Taylor 2002). This is particularly relevant for the research on memory: if memory, in the Halbwachsian tradition, happens in social frameworks, and if individual remembering is embedded in the meaning-making of a collective, then individual interviews provide a way of tapping into a collective discourse. Individual memories reveal traces of the social frameworks in which such memories have been produced and reproduced. While individually retold, memories reflect collective patterns of interpretation. These patterns are the cultural material from which memory is made. Thus, individual interviews offer a fruitful way of assessing collective memories. Therefore, I treat interviews like 'memory texts' that are able to 'voice a collective imagination' (Kuhn 2000: 191). Individual stories are linked to broader (and, of course, intrinsically plural and contentious) collective narratives, taking into account that 'the psychical and the social, if formally distinct, are in practice always intertwined' (Kuhn 2000: 192). Through individual interviews, I reconstruct the patterns that constitute the traces of mnemonic practices and social rituals.

Producing these 'memory texts' involves conducting interviews in a certain way that does not aim (differently from what often happens) at gathering information about what happened during a certain episode of collective action, but at reconstructing the *ways* in which those episodes are described. If collective memory is situated in the patterns that structure individual accounts, then the material needed by the researcher consists, above all, in these individual accounts. This is why I never opened any of my interviews by stating that it was part of a

research project about memory or, indeed, asked any activists directly about the collective memories of the student movement. Confounding research questions with interview questions, and asking interviewees the questions that the research is supposed to answer is a common and recognised pitfall in social science. In this case, it would have been even more dangerous, since the goal of this work is to assess the role of memory in the movements' discourse and action, and not the movements' discourse about memory. I usually presented this work as research on individual stories of militancy in the context of a broader experience of mobilisation, asking activists to recount, from the beginning, their own stories: how they became involved in the movement, what their experiences have been, etc. Later, the interviews developed from the particular to the general, in a process of gradual and progressive abstraction from the individual experience situated in one specific mobilisation context to general considerations on the history of student movements.

It was in these individual accounts, treated as 'memory texts', that I later looked for traces of collective memories; the analysis is presented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this thesis. Of course, this does not mean that I avoided discussing memory in the interviews. In fact, my interviewees often shared their thoughts on memory in general, and on how the movement remembers, etc. These are examples of reflexivity that are extremely valuable, especially in a context of engaged research. But they cannot be the only source of the analysis, otherwise I would be delegating to them the researchers' work. Data and data analysis need to be distinguished, and for the purposes of this work, memory texts produced in qualitative interviews are the data to be analysed, even if, within them, there are analytical elements that cannot be overlooked.

Even though interviews are the most prevalent research tool of this field (particularly when it involves qualitative analysis of collective action and, in particular, research on the symbolic and cultural aspects of mobilisation), the limits of this instrument cannot be ignored. In particular, oral one-on-one dialogues are not always able to account for the institutional but implicit aspects of symbolic and material culture, such as, in my case, the memories that are embedded in certain spaces, settings, and traditions. Participant observation might be a useful tool to address this issue in future research (even if it has its own inherent limitations). In this work, I tried to face this challenge by gathering as much information as possible from the interviews and by situating it in physical and symbolic spaces coherent with the purposes of this research. For example, the vast majority of the interviews were conducted either in the universities, in particular in occupied spaces and in common spaces used during the

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mobilisations, or in public spaces in the university neighbourhoods that are a significant part of the ‘submerged’ networks that sustain mobilisations. The choice of localising the interviews in such spaces, which most of the time did not need to be pushed on the activists but came from them, is far from being completely able to overcome the limits of individual interviews in accounting for collective and institutional processes, but nonetheless proved useful to incentivise activists to refer to events and practices situated in those not so neutral spaces.

Phase	Methods	Sources	Goals
Mapping the public discourse about past social conflict	Media content analysis	Media: mainstream press	Tracing the paths of different narratives in the field of public memory.
Verifying the role of public memory in contemporary social movements	Qualitative interviews	Activists of contemporary social movements	Reconstructing the contribution of the memory of the past in the building of the symbolic environment of contemporary movements Identifying the strategies adopted to deal with the influence of the past.

3. Case studies

For the purposes of this work, the student movement seemed to be the best choice because of its cyclical nature, its interaction between national and international conditions (della Porta 1996: 37-38) and between generational and political belongings, which makes it the most useful field to investigate public memory.

In this way, focusing on the student movement in different historical contexts both the narratives of the past and the contemporary reaction to them will refer to the same social group.

At the same time, the student movement usually goes beyond its original university-related claims, addressing general issues and involving in its discourse different narratives such as nationalism, democracy, class struggle, etc. (della Porta 1996, Maravall 1978). I compare the student movement in two countries (Italy and Spain) and at two different stages: the so-called ‘long ‘68’ and the second half of the 2000s.

	Contentious past	Present
Italy	‘long ‘68’	2008-2011
Spain		

The main reason I chose the student movement and these two countries is homogeneity: in fact, it is not common to find movements that refer to the same social constituency (in this case: students) active in two countries at the same time, indeed, at the same time in two different stages of history. In fact, as I will illustrate in the next paragraphs, both Italy and Spain were characterised by significant waves of student mobilisation both between the 1960s and 1970s (during the so-called ‘long ‘68’) and between 2008 and 2011. Therefore, the choice of this movement and of these two countries provides a rare opportunity for research.

Furthermore, investigating the role of memory in student movements, which are characterised by a frequent and quick turnover, is particularly interesting since the permanence of traces of the past, in such ephemeral social actors, seems almost counter-intuitive.

3.1 Contentious past

The selection of the national contexts has various rationales, and in particular the fact that the Italian and Spanish cases share some conditions that make the comparison possible and at the same time have very different contexts, which make the comparison potentially useful.

First of all, in both cases there were strong student mobilisations during the so-called ‘long

'68'⁴, and both the Italian and the Spanish student movements linked general political issues to education-related topics (della Porta 1996, Maravall 1978). Furthermore, both the Spanish and the Italian public memories are traditionally focused on an earlier period, and in particular the civil conflicts between fascists and antifascists of the 1930s and 1940s (Focardi 2005, Aguilar 2008, Foot 2009). The cycle of protest also follows a similar path, with the processes of fragmentation, isolation and radicalisation of the movement (della Porta 1996, Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer & Baldó Lacomba 2007).

There is, of course, one big difference: until 1976, Spain was an authoritarian regime, and this distinction in the political opportunity structure has obviously influenced both the mobilisation and its media coverage.

Nevertheless, the difference between the large space of public memory occupied by the conflictual commemoration of '68 in Italy (De Luna 2009) and the lack of attention for the same period in the Spanish public memory (Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer and Baldó Lacomba 2007, Aguilar 2008) seems more significant than the difference between the levels of mobilisation in the two countries. Therefore, and as we will see later, this condition can be attributed at least partially to the outcome of the memory processes that have been developing in the field of public memory in the two countries for the last three decades. Furthermore, the Spanish '68 has been less analysed than its well-known French counterpart, which has a central position in public memory. The choice of Spain is more challenging and at the same time more stimulating.

3.2 Present

Between 2008 and 2011, both Italy and Spain experienced phases of intense student mobilisation. When I began my research, in the autumn of 2009, the comparison between these two cases seemed particularly favourable given the contemporary explosion of student protests in the two countries between the autumn of 2008 and the spring of 2009. Later, the movements developed in different ways: after a similar decline of action in the course 2009-2010, Italy

⁴ In Spain, the period of maximum mobilisation is usually considered to be 1956-1975, while in Italy it was 1968-1980 (Balestrini & Moroni 1997, Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer & Baldó Lacomba 2007)

lived through another intense wave of student protests in the autumn of 2010, while Spanish students were particularly active in the spring of 2011, in a generation-based campaign that would prove instrumental for the eruption of the 15-M Movement (Mir 2009, Fernandez, Sevilla and Urban 2010, Caruso, Giorgi, Mattoni and Piazza 2010, Zamponi 2011).

The student wave of mobilisation in Spain is usually called ‘anti-Bolonia’, or simply ‘Bolonia’, given that its main target was the series of legislative and governmental measures taken by the Spanish government to implement the recommendations of the ‘Bologna Process’ (the series of agreements between European governments, which began during a summit in Bologna in 1999, aiming at establishing the European Higher Education Area). A critique of what was perceived by a part of the student population as a process of commodification of education functional to neoliberal globalisation started spreading in 2006 and 2007, and between 2008 and 2009 occupations, strikes, and demonstrations had affected most Spanish universities. My analysis focuses on the three largest university cities in the country, Madrid (in the centre), Barcelona (in the north) and Seville (in the south), which are capitals of the regions (Comunidad de Madrid, Catalunya and Andalucia) that together host more than half of the national university student population (MECD 2013), and were indicated by all my interviewees as the three most important centres of mobilisation. I selected the first activists to interview with the help of key informants in the Spanish movement context, and was then helped by the same interviewees to expand my sample. I interviewed 20 people, obtaining a sufficient diversity in terms of gender (15 males and 5 females), city (9 in Madrid, 8 in Barcelona and 3 in Seville), age (from 22 to 32, with an average of 25.75) and political leaning (6 belonged to the post-Trotskyist area close to the party *Izquierda Anticapitalista*, 4 to a Catalan student union AEP, close to the Communist Party and the leftist coalition *Izquierda Unida*, 3 to the galaxy of post-autonomous social centres, 1 had a Marxist-Leninist background, 3 participated in the unite movement coordination MAE in Seville, among which 2 were also close to *Izquierda Unida*, and finally 3 did not participate in any organised group, among which 1 came from an anarchist background).

In Italy, the student protests between 2008 and 2011 are usually identified as the ‘anti-Gelmini’ cycle, named after Mariastella Gelmini, minister of education in the right wing government lead by Silvio Berlusconi from May 2008 to November 2011. Protests started in September 2008 after the approval of Legge 133/2008, which drastically cut state funding to public universities (by 63.5 million euros in 2009, by 190 million euros in 2010, by 316 million euros

in 2011, by 417 million euros in 2012, and by 455 million euros in 2013) and allowed the transformation of public universities into private research foundations. The protests, under the journalistic label of *Onda Anomala* ('Anomalous Wave'), included occupations, demonstrations and blockades, and continued until the spring of 2009. A second peak of protests occurred in the autumn of 2010, coinciding with the parliamentary itinerary of a massive university reform (the so-called 'Gelmini law', proposing the introduction of external members onto university boards, the replacement of student grants with loans, and the abolition of tenure for researchers). Also in Italy, my analysis is mainly focused on three large university cities, one in the north (Turin), one in the centre (Rome) and one in the south (Naples) to which I was also able to add interviews in Padua, Florence and Pisa, in order to enrich the sample both in terms of geographic diversity and political pluralism. I made contact with my first set of activists through direct connections, that is, through the relationships I had established through my own participation in the movement. In this case too, I was helped by those initial interviewees to contact other activists. I interviewed 20 people, obtaining also in this case sufficient diversity by gender (14 males and 6 females), city (5 in Rome, 6 in Turin, 4 in Naples, 1 in Padua, 2 in Pisa and 2 in Florence), age (from 23 to 32, with an average of 26.85) and political leaning (10 belonged to local associations or collectives, with different backgrounds, that, during the mobilisation, formed the national student network, characterised by leftist orientation and 'student union' inspiration *LINK-Coordinamento Universitario*; 7 belonged to the local collectives that, during the mobilisation, formed the national student network *Uniriot*, near to the galaxy of post-autonomous social centres, among which 2 came from the most radical sector, which split from *Uniriot* at the end of 2010; 2 belonged to local collectives that, during the mobilisation, formed the national network *Atenei in Rivolta*, near to the post-Trotskyist party *Sinistra Critica*; and 1 was not part of any organised group, with a Marxist-Leninist background).

4. An experience of engaged research

The distance between researcher and object of study has often been an issue of debate in social movement studies. Some scholars have been criticising the 'divide between the practice of social change and the study of such efforts' as 'artificial', and due to the progressive institutionalisation of the discipline (Croteau et al. 2005, xii–xiii). My experience in this

research project has been quite the opposite, given that identifying this divide, in my work and my everyday life, has been a delicate issue from the methodological, epistemological and ethical point of view, the implications of which I will now examine in most transparent possible way.

In fact, I have been an activist, at various levels, in the Italian student movement, for more than a decade. When I enrolled on the Ph.D. programme at the EUI in September 2009, I was involved in the process of building *Link-Coordinamento Universitario* (a national university students' union) and the *Rete della Conoscenza* (a second-level network connecting Link with the school students' union *Unione degli Studenti*), organisations that played a very relevant role in the mobilisations of the last few years, and in which I held various positions, at the national level, until March 2012, when the natural turnover process of student politics brought me to leave those associations and to continue my political engagement in different fields (mainly grassroots campaigns against precarity, on-line independent media activity and political activism in the composite field of the Italian left).

Thus, my research has to be defined as 'engaged' even from the point of view of simple factual observation, without needing any further elaboration: I have, in fact, been 'engaged' for some time in the same field that I have been investigating. It is not something that I was directly looking for: in fact, when I started developing a research project of the relationship between memory and movements, I did not plan to base it on the student movement. This idea was suggested later by my supervisor and based on scientific considerations, such as the possibility of tracing memories over a significant time span and the presence of a contemporary counterpart of past movements. This does not mean that my political experience has had nothing to do with my research project: as I have explained in the introduction, my interest towards the processes of social mobilisation and mnemonic practices is naturally informed by political connotations linked to my experience as an activist.

This peculiar, structural condition as 'engaged researcher' means that obviously I experience some of the traits that have been identified by the scholarship. Stefania Milan has defined engaged research as:

[T]hose inquiries into the social world that, without departing from systematic, evidence-based, social science research, are designed to make a difference for disempowered communities and people beyond the academic community. They may, for example, address issues of concern to the

disadvantaged, or may support the attempts by social movement activists to set the agenda of policymakers. (Milan 2014: 11)

However, as Milan further explains, ‘engaged research does not call for the blurring of the boundaries between activists and researchers; rather, it acknowledges the reciprocal roles, with their own strengths and drawbacks, and tries to build on those’ (Milan 2014: 11). In my case, this has meant establishing boundaries between different activities and experiences, without losing the favourable conditions that my peculiar position has provided. In fact, investigating a movement with which I was very familiar has proven advantageous in at least two ways: on the one hand, it was easier, for me, than for an ‘outsider’ to understand what activists meant when they shared their experiences, what background informed their choices, in what political context their references were situated; on the other hand, due to the relationships I had established during my militancy, I had very easy access to a large number of student activists throughout Italy, which proved very useful as interviewees.

For each of these advantages, there is at least one downside: my deep knowledge of the Italian student movement landscape meant that my interviewees might take for granted certain things and avoid mentioning them explicitly, or could create an unbalance with the Spanish context, of which I had no previous direct knowledge; and the easy access to student activists, given the high level of factionalism in the Italian student movement, could bring me to oversample some movement areas in respect to others.

Given that this is the structural condition in which I conducted my research, my only option is to acknowledge it, problematise it in the most transparent way possible, and discuss the research strategies that I have used to face these challenges. The final section of this chapter will do just that.

First of all, I have to say that factionalism, both during the sampling phase, i.e. when I chose my interviewees, and when conducting the interviews, proved to be a smaller problem than expected. I managed to interview activists belonging to different political areas, without encountering significant diffidence or hostility from those who had been participating in the movement through different groups and structures from my own. The rejections that I received from some potential interviewees were never explained in political terms, even if that may have been a factor in some cases. In any case, they were not relevant in changing my sample, nor were they significantly different from those I had in the Spanish context. This probably has

something to do with the rather unitary nature that the Italian student movement assumed from 2008 to 2010, establishing relationships of reciprocal trust, built during the most intense phases of action, that endure and are able to overcome the known barriers of Italian political traditions. Furthermore, the structure of the interviews, as I have explained, was mainly based on the reconstruction – led by the activists – of their stories of militancy inside the movement. This choice created a relaxed atmosphere and a feeling of empathy in the interviews, given that remembering intense and enjoyable moments of the previous years created the right emotional climate. Finally, in order to avoid the risk of the activists being influenced by previous interactions with me about my research interests, I avoided interviewing the people that had been closest to me during the mobilisations, and with which I had shared some of my ideas and hypotheses about the relationship between memory and movements. This does not mean that there is no content, in the interviews material, that has been influenced by my ideas or thoughts, but it means that what there is of ‘mine’, in the activists’ discourse, is the result of my interaction with them as a movement activist and not of predetermined scholarly hypotheses. At the end of the day, the movement discourse is the result of complex interactions between all the actors involved in the mobilisation, and I was one of them.

As far as the content of the interviews is concerned, the only real problem I had, which was connected with my peculiar status as an activist-researcher, was the tendency among Italian activists to take for granted that I understood certain things without the need for much elaboration on their part. I needed, as I have explained in section 2.1, interviews that could be analysed as ‘memory texts’, with as few as possible omissions, but this problem was easily solved in the direct interaction with the interviewees, thanks to their kindness and patience when I asked them to elaborate a little further on things they had said. Finally, the problem of asymmetric knowledge of the Italian and Spanish movement contexts was addressed and solved, as far as was humanly possible, thanks to the help of many Spanish friends and colleagues, among which I am particularly grateful to Joseba Fernandez, Jorge Sola and Ines Campillo, who devoted time and energy to answering my questions about the most trivial details of the political context of the Spanish universities.

The interviews have been conducted in Italian and in Spanish, and the articles have been analysed in their original Italian or Spanish version, before being translated. All translations have been made by me, if not stated otherwise.

**Part 2 - Memory in discourse: representations of the 1960s
and 1970s in the media forum**

Chapter 4 - Conflictual memories of the Italian student movement: the 'long '68' in the field of public memory

1 The student movement, '68, '77

As I have already stated in the previous chapter, it is extremely difficult to distinguish the student movements in an age of general mobilisation like that of Italy in the '60s and '70s.

The historiographical debate on this topic reflects that difficulty: the most common definition is the 'long '68', a term coined by Marco Revelli (1995) to define the entire cycle of protests (Tarrow 1994) that occurred between 1968 and 1978, which involved at first the universities, then factories and various sectors of society. The main criticisms of this approach concern Revelli's identification of the student movement as the initiator of the cycle and, therefore, his eventual underestimation of the labour mobilisations of the 1960s (Urso 1999, Armani 2005). From my point of view, I am not interested in the causes of the cycle of protest, but in its representation. Therefore, I choose to use the definition 'long '68' and the consequent periodization, which is not challenged by Revelli's critics as far as the student movement is concerned. However, the continuous intersections and interactions between the student movement and the context of general mobilisations that characterised that time have to be taken into account.

In order to maintain this focus on the student movement, I choose to follow the representations of two events that took place inside a university ('La Sapienza' University of Rome, the largest university in Europe) and whose protagonists were university students. Nevertheless, as will be shown in this chapter, these events have been represented more as symbols of '68 in general than as symbols of the student movements as such.

2. Historiography

The contemporary historical debate about the Italian 'long '68' is articulated around a few topics (the continuity between the mobilisations of 1968 and the often violent struggles of the '70s, the role of the earlier mobilisations of the '60s, the origins of terrorism and political violence, the missed chances for a new social development) that have been analysed in a large numbers

of books and articles⁵ and can be synthesised into two critical issues: the centrality of '68 and of political violence as references for the study of the entire decade, and the role of movements as key actors of the Italian political, social and cultural scene in the 1970s (Armani 2005: 42). The past militancy of some historians in social movements and political groups of the '70s is obviously used as an argument in the academic debate, and the category of 'possessive memory' (Braunstein 1997) applies to them as well as to the memoirs of former activists. According to Barbara Armani, the centrality of '68 and the discontinuity between the peaceful mobilisation of the late 1960s and the political violence of the 1970s are common trends that can be found both in the historiographical production and in the media, and are linked to the same phenomenon of possessive memory:

In the representation of '68 two different discursive and analytical levels seem to merge: the mediatic *vulgata* and its cultured version. Two narrative systems that use in good part the same sources – written texts, images, reports, personal and political memories – and that are crossed by ideological and generational tensions, self-referential drives and emotional echoes. The media – press, cinema, TV – have spread, for the last decade, a 'slick' version of the youth protest, of the changes in culture and costume that affected Italian society in the late '60s. Without totally obscuring the data of contention, it has been produced an image that nowadays defuses the potentially devastating charge that they contain, dissolves the ambiguities that fostered the practices and the political elaboration of the movements, the hypotheses of social development that the most advanced part of the protest was confusedly outlined. The discourses, the images and the memories of '68 seem to embody a powerful operation of cultural marketing, mixing real data, spread perceptions and autobiography. (Armani 2005: 46, my translation)

In this 'regressive' vision of the '70s, in more or less concealed forms, the disappointment and the crisis of identity of an entire generation, which lived through the revolutionary optimism of 1968 as youths or as adults, emerges. [...] The construction of an epic of revolt, which sharply divides the experience of 1968 from the violent and nihilistic evolution of the late '70s, might be [...] the field in which the trace of a generational view of events is the clearest. (Armani 2010: 212, my translation)

I refer to this debate, which is not part of the scope of my research, only to point out how thin the line between history and memory becomes when we deal with topics that are still relevant

⁵ For a critical review, see the books and articles quoted in Armani (2010), and in particular, Ginsborg (1990), Della Porta (1990), Lanaro (1992), Revelli (1995), Crainz (2003).

in the public debate and that most contemporary historians remember as part of their own lives. Historians, as I will show later, are often used in the media as scientific experts on '68 and at the same time as generational witnesses. This short circuit needs further analysis in the frameworks of the public use of history (Habermas 1987, Gallerano 1995) and of the contemporary historical debate.

3. Public memory

Cinema, TV and the press

According to Giovanni De Luna's reconstruction, 'with the defeat, everything was smashed under the exorbitant weight of terrorism and of its victims', and, with the dissolution of most groups, the "private" [...] went back to being a sort of besieged fortress [...]. Oblivion and silence were the first responses to delusion and defeat' (De Luna 2009: 140, my translation). This void was filled first, in the 1980s, by cinema, which focused primarily on violence and terrorism, with 'a periodization that flattened a whole decade into its second half, reducing the whole era into a unique tragic moment in which evil had converged. The *before* existed only as a premonition of the imminent catastrophe, the *after* was not interesting, and the *during* was flattened into the facts of the final years, above all on one event: the murder of Aldo Moro' (De Luna 2009: 142, italics added, my translation). The representation of violence and terrorism in Italian cinema has already been analysed by different scholars (Lombardi 2009, O'Leary 2009, Nocera 2010), and they agree on at least one point: that cinema played a fundamental role in filling the memory void on the Italian 1970s:

The conservative wave of the 1990s, the political homogenization of the press, the accommodation of the 'official' historical narrative of the *anni di piombo* to the unsatisfactory judicial sentences of the last twenty years – all have left an explanatory void and a perceived need for supplementary justice that has been only partially filled by historiography. [...] The emergence of an array of discourses, narrative hypotheses and interpretations, in film and literature, has created the sense that history, above all in the Italian case, could and should also be written and interpreted outside the courtrooms or historical archives.

The work of Marco Tullio Giordana, Giancarlo De Cataldo, Marco Paolini, Carlo Lucarelli, and others are all cases in point. Such work attempts to provide a fictionalized account of events even

where clues and evidence are sporadic, or in those cases where evidence has apparently been misinterpreted or politically manipulated. In a process which may appear paradoxical, fiction has become the pre-eminent means to account for these missing pieces of our recent history and to keep the memory of certain events alive among non-experts. (Antonello & O'Leary 2009: 10)

For an account of the content of these representations, I refer to the essays that I have already cited. For the purposes of this research, the relevant points are the compensatory role played by the media in building the public memory of the '70s and the identification between this decade and terrorism, which involves every level of public memory:

The [representation of the] '70s, therefore, in the public discourse seems decisively marked by the political violence expressed in a polarization around the two event-years of this decade, Sixty-Eight and Seventy-Seven, and around their identification as the matrix of the violent paths. On one hand, the political violence is considered a fundamental element in most parts of the phenomena that interested that period, to the point that the '70s and the years of lead – a definition born to indicate the five years of 1977-82, a time of maximum concentration of episodes of organised political violence – became almost synonymous with the Moro case as the metonymy of the whole decade. On the other hand, instead, in order to regain the articulation and complexity of this time and of the season of movements that started in '68, a specular reading tends to circumscribe the political violence to the margins of this path, to underline in some way its extraneousness and marginality. (Betta 2009: 674, my translation)

According to De Luna's reconstruction, after the 'big snowslide' that hit Italian politics in the early 90s, television acquired a decisive role in re-launching this identification between the 1970s and violence. In fact, the tendency towards sensationalism (Pezzini 2009) and conspiracy theories (O'Leary 2009) conquered Italian TV and cinema during the 80s and 90s (De Luna 2009), and even the examples praised by scholars for their capacity to keep together the needs of the narrative format and the needs of historical complexity, like the TV programme 'La Notte della Repubblica' (Pezzini 2009, De Luna 2009), were almost inevitably focused on terrorism and 'stragismo' (O'Leary 2009: 49), contributing to the identification between the '70s and two interrelated narratives: 'anni di piombo' and 'strategia della tensione'.

As I will show later, in the analysis of the memory of two events in the contemporary Italian newspapers, the 'years of lead' became like the bars of a cage, dividing the present from the past and obscuring things so that today we can only see certain parts of the latter.

The narrative format of the media contributes to the construction of this cage: simplifying reality is the most urgent need in any narrative representation and the stereotypes associated with the identification between the 1970s and violence and terrorism are used as a way to resolve the ambiguity and the complexity of an entire decade and to fit it into the narrative format of the contemporary media.

In this way, the individual stories told in films, TV fiction, etc., become stereotypes, and the choice to commit terrorism made by a character becomes inevitably associated with every kind of political militancy, as Gino Nocera notes about the film 'La meglio gioventù'⁶:

Proceeding in this way, contemporary cinema builds a perceptive grid and more generally, a collective memory that expels politics from the social life and excludes commitment assimilating it, in a caricatured way, to the extreme position, terrorism, present without comment or explanation. (Nocera 2010: 288, my translation)

A similar argument is made by other scholars about the press:

If we look at the material produced by newspapers and mass media it appears clear how much that season and those phenomena are read prevalently, if not almost exclusively, in reference to the political violence, endorsing, at least in the sphere of common sense, a substantial identity between the '70s and the years of lead. The latter denomination, which could refer to the last three years of the decade, is instead extended back until almost '68, with an *a posteriori* reading that looks at the 'before' as a necessary promise for the 'after'. (Betta & Capusotti 2004: 119, my translation)

Memoirs and narrative

Memoirs are probably the most common commemorative form regarding the Italian 'long '68'. Most books on '68 and the 1970s have not been written by historians or journalists, but by the actual protagonists of the time. This is particularly true for the armed struggle, terrorism and the revolutionary groups of the '70s (Betta 2009, Armani 2010, Tabacco 2010), while the case is more complex for what concerns 1968 and the student movement. When we talk about the social movements of the '70s, in fact, we usually refer to some precise revolutionary groups, characterised by a strong sense of belonging and a clear border between who was inside the

⁶ This film is also analysed in De Luna (2004: 213-224).

groups and who was outside, whereas when we deal with '68 we tend to imply a general and generational phenomenon, involving most people who were young at the time: therefore, memoirs of the '70s have been written by the militants as such, while memoirs of '68 have been written by journalists, intellectuals, etc., regardless of their real level of militancy at the time⁷. But can we really distinguish between the memoirs of '68 and memoirs of the '70s? Most memoirs of revolutionary militants of the '70s are life histories that involve an account of '68 (Betta 2009), but we would never characterise them as 'memoirs of '68', because they present themselves as narratives of terrorism, violence, and of the 'years of lead'⁸. Therefore, this phenomenon can be read the other way around: accounts of militants tend to refer to the '70s, while memoirs of generational witnesses tend to focus on '68, or, anyway, to use the expression '68' to define the focus on their narrative, even if it covers the whole 1970s.

The role of memoirs is particularly important in a context in which possessive memory plays a relevant role, because of the lack of historiographical interest in the topic until recently (Betta 2009): in this way, 'the words of the ex militants [...] expressed in articles and TV interviews, filmed memories, documents, novels, stories, autobiographies' became 'the quickest and easiest way to access the knowledge and the facts of events, roots, political and existential paths' (Betta 2009: 675, my translation).

Memoirs of militants

The scholarship has focused in particular on the memoirs of former militants of armed groups, because of the significant relevance, both from a quantitative and from a symbolic point of view, that these accounts have in the field.

In the analysis of these texts, David Moss (1990) and Emmanuel Betta (2009) use different periodizations, but agree on identifying a phase (the early 80s according to Moss, the late 80s according to Betta) in which many militants began to publish their memoirs – either for reasons linked to potential reductions of prison sentences in case of cooperation with the judicial

⁷ These considerations are derived from the literature (Betta 2009, Armani 2010, Tabacco 2010) and from an analysis of the most important Italian online book catalogues (*Amazon.it* and *IBS*).

⁸ This expression (in Italian 'anni di piombo') comes from the title of the 1981 film by Margarethe von Trotta (*Die Bleierne Zeit*), and it is properly used to refer to the time of maximum intensity of political violence, between 1977 and 1982, even if sometimes it is used in a more general sense to cover the 1970s (Betta 2009, Armani 2010).

authorities or of dissociation from terrorism⁹, and a later phase (placed by Moss after 1985 and by Betta only after 2003) in which the victims also start to find a voice. The ‘most significant series of autobiographical publications’, anyway, seems to have begun in 2003:

[W]ho had published, does it again, the terms of a latent conflict of identity inside the BR area, also regarding public memory, heighten, and the voices of the victims decidedly enter the public space of memory. The renewed interest towards these autobiographical texts is driven by a strong dimension of actualization, marked especially by the publishing houses [...] and by the press. The context is marked by the return of the BR with the killings of D'Antona and Biagi and by the rise of a new radical and violent social contention, which has its climax and symbol in the G8 summit in Genoa in July 2001, with the re-appearance, after decades, of death in a political demonstration and with the return of practices of repression by the police that are marked by strongly political connotations. In this perspective, [...] the public discourse has looked at a direct comparison with both the season of movements and the years of lead, re-proposing the topic of the violent outcome of the movements' activism. (Betta 2009: 679, my translation)

The huge success of Calabresi's book, and the large space that the voice of the victims and of their relatives have had ever since, show, on the other hand, how the voice of the victims has substantially substituted the voice of the murderers, without facing the background issue of a reflection on revolutionary and anti-revolutionary violence, on their reciprocal interactions and recognitions, on the practices that are derived from them and on the various responsibilities which produced them. (Betta 2009: 701, my translation)

Memoirs of victims

The point of view of the victims, in fact, is not more objective than the point of view of the murderers. If we leave aside any normative concern, we realise the both these points of view are absolutely partial, and motivated by precise goals, like the reduction of prison sentences for the murderers or voicing a sense of injustice for the victims.

If we analyse the memoirs of relatives of victims that have been published in the last couple of years (Calabresi 2008, Casalegno 2008, Moro 2007, Negri 2009, Tobagi 2009), we will find a common trait: they all emphasise the need to have their voice heard, to break the wall of silence erected around their stories, and the will to balance out the memory in the public field, that,

⁹ In fact, Moss refers to Law 15/1980 and Betta to Law 34/1987.

according to them, is in favour of the former terrorists. Sharing these reasons and these feelings (the sense of being deserted by the state, the grievance, the frustration) has made them form a community, able to share a common lexicon, common goals, and common rituals.

The authors of these books are very different, first of all from a generational point of view: Andrea Casalegno was born in 1944, Giovanni Moro in 1958, Anna Negri in 1964, Mario Calabresi in 1970, Benedetta Tobagi in 1977. The generational factor influences the role of the authors in the stories they tell: Casalegno belongs to the same generation as the terrorists, which is different from the one to which the other children of victims belong; the experience of the '70s that Giovanni Moro had – he was already at university when his father died – or by Anna Negri, who had the chance to participate in the last phase of the ‘long '68’ as a high school student, is very different to the experience of Mario Calabresi, who was only a child in that decade, or of Benedetta Tobagi, who was born after most of these episodes.

This generational factor deeply influences the biographies: Casalegno, for example, tells in this case his story as a victim, but at the same time he was a militant of Lotta Continua, involved in many violent episodes of the '70s. Moreover, the man who was found guilty of the murder of Luigi Calabresi, Adriano Sofri, has told his story as the victim of unjustified detention (Sofri 2009). Furthermore, the label of ‘children’ does not say everything about the identity of the person who decides to tell his story: Casalegno spends more pages, in his book, in telling the story of his family and in remembering the death of his wife, than in reconstructing the murder of his father. And the analysis of Giovanni Moro, a political sociologist, goes far beyond his personal experience as the son of the president of the DC killed by the BR. And what about Mario Calabresi, editor of *La Stampa*, or Anna Negri, a rather successful film director? It is evident that their roles as public figures have influenced their decision to tell their stories as the ‘children’ of victims.

This brief excursus on the biographical and generational profiles of the authors is relevant on two levels: on the one hand, it shows how the different approaches towards the subjects of the books are inevitably connected to the authors’ different life experiences; on the other hand, it explains that labels like ‘children’ and ‘victims’ cannot be interpreted as identities that reflect the reasons, often complex and multifaceted, which could have driven them to tell their story, but as analytical categories, useful to understand some common characteristics among the commemorative narratives they have produced.

Furthermore, their role as ‘victims’ is not considered by the authors as a simple biographical

accident, but is the object of a process of collective identification, which unites and transcends the individual stories. The community of the victims is in part concrete and in part imagined, but its existence is evident in the references among the books, in their almost contemporary publication, and above all in some explicit statements of the authors, which often inscribe their personal stories into the general story of the 'victims of terrorism' (Calabresi 2008: 68, Moro 2007: 132-137, Negri 2009: 265), forgotten by the state and humiliated by the fame of the ones who killed their loved ones. The most significant of these statements is the subtitle of Calabresi's book: 'Story of my family and of other victims of terrorism'. This definition is important for two reasons: on the one hand, the status of 'victims' is extended from the person who has actually been killed to the entire family; on the other hand, every personal story is read through the lens of other similar stories, and the famous son of a famous victim can take advantage of his celebrity to bring to light all the stories that unite the community of 'victims'. Therefore, the most important thing for most the authors is not the reconstruction of the '70s, or the analysis of the roots of political violence. Their goal is to have their story heard, to make their voice and their experience reach an audience. In fact, the real motivation behind these books seems to be the deep frustration that these people have vis-a-vis the representation of the '70s promoted by the terrorists in the public field.

Their memories are often vague, imprecise, and reconstructed through secondary sources (relatives, friends, the media), but, given the role they have gained in the public sphere, they need to be carefully analysed. This phenomenon is still too recent to be completely understood, but some tendencies already seem to have emerged.

The role of the victims and the narratives they promote in the field of public memory has to be inscribed in the context of the contemporary representation of the '70s in the field of public memory that I have already described: the metonymy between the 'years of lead' and the '70s leads to the double analogy between political mobilisation and violence and between political violence and terrorism: 'political mobilisation = violence = terrorism' (De Luna 2009: 143, my translation). Many passages, in the texts, refer to this double equation, which can be read in both senses: the causal sense, with the mobilisation which produces violence which produces terrorism, and the interpretative sense, with terrorism as the key to understand violence and, through violence, the political mobilisation of the '70s. Particularly evident is the use of a lexicon referring to the semantic field of irrationality, to define the political climate of the '70s

(‘drunkenness’¹⁰, ‘fever’¹¹, ‘obsession for the absolute’¹², ‘madness’¹³). Sometimes these expressions are used to characterise a precise historical and social phenomenon (the militaristic drift of some parts of the revolutionary left), while in most cases they refer to a sort of collective feeling associated with the '70s.

The metaphors of fever and irrationality tend to define the '70s as a parenthesis (Armani 2010: 210) in Italian history, a long dream (or nightmare) that changed the daily lives of millions people, until the abrupt awakening. At the same time, this representation does not isolate the '70s from the context of the 20th century, but uses those years as a representative sample of the whole century. This narrative, in fact, can be inscribed in the revisionist tendency to represent the 20th century as characterised by unparalleled violence, caused by the unprecedented mass political mobilisation (Giannuli 2009: 343-352, De Luna 2004).

Another common element among these books, which can be linked to this general critique of politics and of collective belongings, is the individualisation of memory: the reduction of historical processes to individual stories, without any generally valid interpretative mechanism, with the resulting impossibility to formulate any general analysis. Everybody is right from his own point of view, and the shift of focus from historical processes to individual stories leads directly to the overestimation of individual reasons.

My hypothesis, in order to explain the success (Betta 2009: 680) of these stories, is based on the interactions of three factors: the resonance (Armstrong and Cragge 2006: 726-727) between these narratives and the emerging interpretative canon of the '70s (De Luna 2009: 143, Armani 2010: 210); the compliance of these events to the media criteria, because of their nature as human interest stories; the particular moral strength that the victims have in the public field (Jedlowski & Rampazi 1991: 27), that in this case is even stronger, because the authors of these stories represent themselves as ‘dual victims’ (Calabresi 2008: 91-92, Moro 2007: 132-133, my translation), victims of terrorism and of the silence in the public discourse, in which, instead, the narratives of the militants of the revolutionary left have found a space. This second-generation memory has a double competitive advantage: it belongs to the victims, and it is arriving after a long phase of silence. ‘Not all the pasts are equal’, as Anna Lisa Tota has pointed

¹⁰ Tobagi (2009: 294, my translation).

¹¹ Sofri (2009: 189-190, my translation).

¹² Tobagi (2009: 295, my translation).

¹³ Casalegno (2008: 73, my translation).

out, and ‘those that have been subtracted, if in time they manage to surface, end up having recognised a greater social strength’ (Tota 1997: 17, my translation).

Thanks to the interaction between these three factors, individualisation, a typical characteristic of biography, becomes a particularly significant element in determining the success of these narratives. This phenomenon, which is still ongoing and needs further analysis, seems to imply the emergence of a second-generation possessive memory: a generation feels excluded by the public representation of the '70s and reclaims its voice, but it has not participated in the events of the time, either as militants, or on the side of the state, or as witness. Its only relationship to those events is the personal story of everyone as a victim, and the trauma that everyone has experienced. In this way, this trauma and this role as victim become the keys to interpret the whole decade. This narrative, then, is proposed in the field of public memory, where it conquers a certain position, thanks to its resonance with the anti-20th century political and cultural context and with the media criteria, and to the particular moral strength of the memory of the victims, contributing to the success of a new interpretative canon of the '70s.

After all, the power of the memory of the victims is so strong that even the militants and the historians (in particular the militant historians) are turning to it, as the introduction to a book by Giovanni De Luna shows:

The main [goal of this work] was to reconstruct the memory of many victims that the history of the '70s and of terrorism risked cancelling out. (De Luna 2009: 7, my translation)

4. Tracing the paths of two events in 40 years of public memory

Sources

My analysis starts from the examination of media content concerning social movements and episodes of contention of the past decades, in order to identify the most powerful narratives in contemporary public memory on this issue. I have focused primarily on mainstream independent commercial newspapers (*La Repubblica*, *Il Corriere della sera* and *La Stampa*), given the level of public legitimacy that they have.

I have used different newspapers for different years, depending on the accessibility of digital archives. In fact, for the 1990s and 2000s, given that both the most prestigious and best-selling daily newspapers in Italy (*La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della Sera*) have a totally accessible

digital archive, I analysed these. For the previous decade, instead, they have no accessible digital archive, so I analysed the third Italian daily newspaper (*La Stampa*). The use of different sources in different years allows me to analyse the largest set of articles, and does not seem to create any problem in terms of homogeneity of the data, given that there is not substantial difference, from a quantitative point of view, in the coverage of the event by the different newspapers. There might be some qualitative differences, but even the continuity of analysis on the same newspaper for the whole period of time 1968-2008 (which, in any case would not have been possible for *La Repubblica*, which was born in 1976) would have to take into account qualitative differences from year to year, depending on the editorial line chosen at that particular time, on the social and political context, on the journalist who wrote a particular article, and so on.

Events

Rome, March 1, 1968. At 10 a.m. Several thousand students converged on Piazza di Spagna to protest against the police intervention to clear the occupation of the Roman university building by students. The Roman occupation and its counterparts all over Italy were part of a massive mobilization campaign for a reform of the university system. The march, joined by high school students, passed the headquarters of the RAI (the Italian public television broadcasting network) and the Christian Democratic daily, *Il Popolo*, and then reached Valle Giulia, where helmeted policemen armed with truncheons had garrisoned the faculty of architecture. The two sides confronted each other for a few minutes; then the fights, later known in the movement's mythology, as 'The Battle of Valle Giulia', started. The clashes lasted for over three hours, in a dramatic escalation of violence. The police attacked with tear gas and water cannons; the students retaliated with eggs and stones. The police received reinforcements, and so did the students, while an enormous traffic jam blocked the entire city center. According to the police, the students built barricades with cars and destroyed police Jeeps. According to the demonstrators, the police acted with great brutality, charging to the command: 'Kill them'. The struggle, in which about 3,000 demonstrators and 2,000 policemen were involved, resulted in 211 injured (158 of them among the police), 228 arrested and 4 imprisoned. (Della Porta 1995: xiv-xv)

In February 1977 students occupied Rome university to protest against reform proposals made by the Education Minister Malfatti. The occupation quickly became a focal point for disaffection in

the capital. [...] On 19 February Luciano Lama, head of the CGIL¹⁴, heavily protected by trade union and PCI¹⁵ stewards, came to address the occupation. Both the 'creative' and 'militarist' wings of the movement mobilized against him. In a tragic scene of mutual incomprehension, Lama was shouted down and violent clashes broke out between the Autonomi and the stewards of the PCI. A fortnight later, a demonstration of some 60,000 young people in the capital degenerated into a four-hour guerrilla battle with police. Shots were fired on both sides, and a part of the demonstrators chanted a macabre slogan in praise of the P38 pistol, the chosen weapon of the Autonomi. (Ginsborg 1990: 382)

These events are given one line (Ignazi 1999: 127) and six lines (Ignazi 1999: 172) in the 780 pages of the sixth volume (dedicated to the years between 1963 and 1995) of Sabbatucci and Vidotto's *Storia d'Italia*, the most common history textbook, used in most universities. But each of them has its own Wikipedia page, titled after the labels that refer to them in the public discourse: the 'Battle of Valle Giulia'¹⁶ and the 'Chase of Lama'¹⁷. These episodes, remaining at the margins of the mainstream historiographical discourse, have become symbols of the Italian '68 (Della Porta 1995: xv, Passerini 1997: 383) and '77 (Rossanda 1997), and, therefore, because of the already noted phenomenon of polarisation of the whole public memory of that decade around those years (Betta 2009: 674), of the whole 'long '68'. Both of these events involved violent contention, and both of them are usually considered as turning points, key moments in the evolution of the mobilisations towards violent outcomes. But this, from my point of view, is a further reason to use them: these two violent episodes seem to be the best examples to analyse the public memory of the '70s, in which political violence has a fundamental role (Armani 2005, De Luna 2009).

As I have explained in the previous chapter, I am not interested in the reminiscence of precise events, but in the memory of the student movements, which is transmitted and reconstructed through different media and different narratives. But in order to give substance and concreteness to these narratives, I choose to analyse the public representation of particular events, and to investigate these representations in order to identify the larger narratives I am interested in.

¹⁴ The largest Italian trade union confederation, traditionally close to the Socialist and Communist Parties.

¹⁵ Italian Communist Party.

¹⁶ http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battaglia_di_Valle_Giulia

¹⁷ http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_cacciata_di_Lama

Some peculiar cultural artefacts as memory carriers

As Francesca Polletta has argued (indeed, she used it as the title of her famous essay): ‘Culture is not just in your head’ (Polletta 2004). Her argument highlights the cultural nature of political structures, but it is also a good way to underline the concreteness of memory. In fact, the scholarship has shown the role of symbolic carriers (Olick & Robbins 1998: 130), which are able to preserve in time a particular representation of a past event. A great part of every memory process is constituted by the objectification of memory, which separates memory from the individual experience to be reproduced in external symbolic artefacts and practices. The forms of cultural consumption are probably the main way to access this ‘objective culture’ (Jedlowski 1997: 61) that carries the images of the past. The contemporary sociology of memory has suggested that we focus not only on these cultural artefacts (monuments, ceremonies, films, books, etc.) but also on the ‘discursive processes that lead to the artefacts’, on the ‘practices through which these are used, commented and discussed’ and on the ‘conflicts and power relations that interweave around the representations of the past’ (Jedlowski 2007: XIV, my translation).

The ‘Battle of Valle Giulia’ has been portrayed in many songs, films, etc. In particular, two ‘cultural artefacts’ often recur in the newspaper articles I have analysed. The poem ‘Il PCI ai giovani’, by Pier Paolo Pasolini, and the song ‘Valle Giulia’ by Paolo Pietrangeli.

On June 16th, 1968, Pier Paolo Pasolini, one of the most famous Italian poets, writers, intellectuals and film directors, published in the mainstream progressive magazine *L'Espresso* a long poem, entitled ‘The PCI to the youth’. Here are some excerpts:

It's sad. The polemic against
the PCI should have been made during the first half
of the past decade. You are late children.
And it doesn't matter at all if then you weren't born...

Now the journalists of all the world (including
those of television)
kiss (as I believe one still says in the language
of the Universities) your ass. Not me, friends.

You have the faces of spoiled children.
Good blood doesn't lie.
You have the same bad eye.
You are scared, uncertain, desperate
(very good!) but you also know how to be
bullies, blackmailers, and sure of yourselves;
petit-bourgeois prerogatives, friends.

When yesterday at Valle Giulia you fought
with policemen,
I sympathized with the policemen!
Because policemen are children of the poor.¹⁸

Paolo Pietrangeli, Italian folk songwriter and militant, wrote a song called 'Valle Giulia' immediately after the events (Vettori 1975), of which I will translate here only a few lines:

[...]
A quarter past eleven, in front of Architecture
there wasn't yet anything to fear
and we were really many
and the policemen confronting the students 'No to the masters' school!
Away the government, resign!'

They took the sticks in their hand
and they beat like they always do
but suddenly what happened
was a new thing, a new thing, a new thing,
we didn't run away anymore, we didn't run away anymore!

Yes, I remember the 1st March
we were around one thousand five hundred
and the police charged us
but the students chased them away 'No to the masters' school!

¹⁸ Pasolini, P. P. (1968) Il PCI ai giovani. *L'Espresso*, 24, June 16, 1968. Translated in: Lawton, B. and Barnett, L.K. (trans.) (2005) *Heretical Empiricism* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing), p. 150.

Away the government, resign!'.¹⁹

The 'Chase of Lama', on the other hand, has been portrayed in many films and documentaries, which are mentioned in the articles I have analysed. But no article quotes the reference to the episode that appears in 'Coda di lupo' a rather famous song by Fabrizio De André, one of Italy's best-known songwriters.

[...]

And I was already old when near Rome
in Little Big Horn
the short-haired general spoke us at the university
about our blue-collar brothers who buried their hatchets
but we didn't smoke with him, he didn't come in peace.
To the God of 'work your arse off',
never believe.

[...] ²⁰

I have cited these texts for different reasons: I have quoted Pasolini's poem and Pietrangeli's song because they are frequently cited in the articles I have examined, while I have included De André's song only as a point of comparison.

In fact, while Pasolini's poem and Pietrangeli's song are cited in many articles referring to the 'battle of Valle Giulia'²¹, there is no trace of De André's song in any article referring to the 'Chase of Lama'. I am highlighting this fact in order to prove a point: cultural artefacts have different capacities for preserving a specific narrative of the past. The success of a cultural artefact in its field ('Coda di lupo' is quite well-known) is not sufficient to make it matter in the field of public memory. Some peculiar artefacts take on an immediate resonance with a

¹⁹ 'Undici e un quarto avanti a architettura,/ non c'era ancor ragion d'aver paura/ ed eravamo veramente in tanti, / e i poliziotti in faccia agli studenti./ "No alla scuola dei padroni!/ Via il governo, dimissioni!"/ Hanno impugnato i manganelli/ ed han picchiato come fanno sempre loro;/ ma all'improvviso è poi successo/ un fatto nuovo, un fatto nuovo, un fatto nuovo:/ non siam scappati più, non siam scappati più!/ Il primo marzo, sì, me lo rammento,/ saremo stati millecinquecento(e caricava giù la polizia/ ma gli studenti la cacciavan via./ "No alla scuola dei padroni!/ Via il governo, dimissioni!"/' (Pietrangeli 1969, my translation).

²⁰ 'Ed ero già vecchio quando vicino a Roma/ a Little Big Horn/ capelli corti generale ci parlò all'Università/ dei fratelli tute blu che seppellirono le asce/ ma non fumammo con lui non era venuto in pace/ e a un dio fatti il culo non credere mai.' (De André 1978, my translation).

²¹ The citations of Pasolini's poem are analysed in the next section, while references to Pietrangeli's song are in Anonymous (1997), Paolo Pietrangeli al Parioli recital per chitarra e 'memorie'. *La Repubblica*, 25 May p.13, and in many other articles.

certain social group in a certain historical moment, proposing a certain narrative of the past in a certain context of experience. ‘Valle Giulia’ was written by a militant and sung during demonstrations immediately after the event, by people belonging to the same movement that had been the protagonist of that event. Furthermore, it was written according to the traditional format of the folk protest song, with a narrative structure, telling a story and proposing an interpretation of the facts (‘We did not run away any more’ - Valle Giulia was the first occasion in which the movement passed from a defensive to an offensive attitude). ‘Coda di lupo’, on the other hand, has an allegorical structure, and it was written and recorded as the work of a committed artist, in a totally different context. I leave further analysis to the scholars of popular music, but it underlines once again how every actor, project or artefact has different chances of success in the field of public memory depending on the social context and on its own characteristics.

I will start by presenting an overview of the articles citing the two events between the 1960s and 1990 in *La Stampa*, the only available source for those years. Later I will present a table with the other sources for the years in which they are available.

	‘Valle Giulia’	Lama università Roma
1968	33	\
1969	12	\
1970	12	\
1971	6	\
1972	2	\
1973	4	\
1974	6	\
1975	2	\
1976	3	\
1977	7	81
1978	5	30

	‘Valle Giulia’	Lama università Roma
1979	3	19
1980	13	26
1981	20	13
1982	12	12
1983	32	30
1984	10	23
1985	7	22
1986	7	33
1987	6	32
1988	12	8
1989	12	13
1990	11	13

Table 4.1 Occurrences by year of the terms ‘Valle Giulia’ and Lama AND università AND Roma in *La Stampa* between 1968 (1977) and 1990.

In all cases, there is an evident decrease in the early 1980s, followed by an increase in the last part of that decade. As I will explain later, when analysing the articles, my hypothesis links this phenomenon to two different factors. The first is the general quantitative explosion of the public memory in the last two decades that, according to most scholars (Tota 2007: 8), was the outcome of the historical disruptions such as 1989, on the global level, and 1992-93 on the Italian level.

The great turn of contemporary history, which started in 1989 with the fall of communism and the end of bipolarism, has resulted in an impatient rewriting of the past by the most varied subjects (politicians, media professionals, but also historians): it was the more impatient, the less a decent historiography was able to provide instant books and miraculous recipes to interpret a change that was lived as momentous. (Gallerano 1995: 7, my translation)

The second factor is the end of the cycle of protests that goes under the ‘long ‘68’ label. After the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, Italian society was characterised by the so-called ‘reflux’ (Balestrini & Moroni 1997: 666, Ginsborg 1990, Revelli 1995), a gradual decrease of the weight of social movements and collective action in the public field. Therefore, mobilisation-related topics almost disappear from the media (and the fact that the ‘battle of Valle Giulia’ is totally forgotten - to be recovered only some years later, while the ‘Chase of Lama’ remains, says something, as I will discuss later, about the different relations between these two events and the movement's memory). In those years, between 1980 and 1987, there is an historical break: the events that went before were considered recent and near, then become a distant historicised reference.

Table 4.2 presents a quick overview of the citations of the two events that I have found in *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della Sera* in the 1990s and 2000s.

	“movimento studentesco”		Lama università Roma		“Valle Giulia”	
	Repubblica	Corriere	Repubblica	Corriere	Repubblica	Corriere
1990	55		9		12	
1991	14		6		2	
1992	13	15	8	2	13	12
1993	23	49	6	6	7	21
1994	26	49	6	4	4	46
1995	15	34	3	7	7	29
1996	20	41	15	11	6	31
1997	24	33	7	10	45	34
1998	15	37	2	5	55	44
1999	27	23	4	11	26	47
2000	53	12	2	2	49	4
2001	69	38	5	5	60	102
2002	61	12	6	7	80	9
2003	50	31	4	9	47	68
2004	82	20	7	19	77	53
2005	59	35	9	5	39	46
2006	53	30	18	8	62	62
2007	59	32	28	23	71	24
2008	118	62	24	10	87	19

Table 4.2 Occurrences by year of the terms ‘Valle Giulia’ and Lama AND università AND Roma in *Il Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* between 1990 and 2008.

The column ‘movimento studentesco’ has two different goals: on the one hand, to check the homogeneity of the data between the two newspapers, on the other hand to verify the eventual correlation between the presence of a student mobilisation in the media and the frequency of the references to the two past events.

Looking at Table 4.2, this correlation seems to exist but is not as strong as one might expect. In fact, as I will show later, the memories of these two events do not remain strictly linked to the student movement. Both of them go beyond the limits of the student movement to become

a memory of contention, which can be used in different fields. Nevertheless, the table shows how two factors are able to trigger the memory of the two events: prolonged phases of social contention (as in 2001 or in 2005) and anniversaries. The two years of homogeneous peaks in the commemoration in the media (especially as far as Valle Giulia is concerned) correspond to the two years of maximum activity of the global justice movement in Italy, after the G8 in Genoa: 2001 and 2002. The high correlation between the memory of the ‘Chase of Lama’ and references to the present in 2004 is linked to a case involving the secretary general of the Left Democrats Piero Fassino and the anti-war movement. For 1997 it is quite obvious to see the 20th anniversary of 1977, given that there is no reference to present episodes of contention, as occurred in 1998 with the 30th anniversary of 1968. In 2007 there is a difference between the newspapers: while *La Repubblica* limits itself to the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of 1977, *Il Corriere della sera* links it to contemporary episodes of contention. In fact, the presence of an anniversary triggers the activation of a certain image of the past, facilitating its use even in contexts that are not linked with the commemoration. Obviously, facilitating does not mean determining. It is an opportunity for the journalists to exploit, depending on their agenda. It is interesting, in this sense, how the correlation between the memory of the ‘Chase of Lama’ is stronger in *Il Corriere della sera* during the centre-left government led by Romano Prodi (2006-2008) and in *La Repubblica* during the centre-right government led by Silvio Berlusconi. This phenomenon seems to depend on the general tendency of a media outlet near to the political opposition (like the progressive *La Repubblica* during Berlusconi's mandate and conservative *Il Corriere della sera* during Prodi's) to stress the presence of social contention, but, in this case, as I will show later, there might be something else at play, because the ‘Chase of Lama’ has a particular strength and meaning in the history of the Italian political Left.

The only entirely homogeneous peak involving the different memories and newspapers is in 2008, which saw the co-occurrence of a strong student mobilisation and an anniversary.

The memory break of the '80s that I mentioned before is illustrated well by the different references to Pasolini's poem by decade: between 1969 and 1978, there is 1 reference; between 1979 and 1988, 6 references; between 1989 and 1998, 12 (in *La Repubblica*) and 13 (in *Il Corriere della sera*) references; between 1999 and 2008, 30 (in *La Repubblica*) and 26 (in *Il Corriere della sera*).

5. The ‘battle of Valle Giulia’

The first accounts of the episode contributed to the creation of the narrative of the ‘battle’, underlining the violent nature of the event²², but they were not prejudiced against the student movement; on the contrary, even after the most conflictual episode of the student mobilisation of '68, the press was sympathetic:

The majority of the students are engaged in a wide debate on general issues. There had been heated exchanges of ideas, but the discussions never went far from a civil tone. Clearly, however, there are groups that have an interest in provoking incidents among the same students, in order to make all the constructive debates aimed at building a consensus impossible. And these cannot be anything other than fascists.²³

The movement played from the beginning an active role in the building of the memory of Valle Giulia. In particular, the most revolutionary-leaning parts of the movement, the workerist groups that a few months later would begin to form Lotta Continua (Cazzullo 2006) and Potere Operaio (Grandi 2005), started to develop a specific mnemonic project, tending to use ‘the battle of Valle Giulia’ as a symbol of a new, offensive attitude of the movement. A few weeks after the event, there were reports in the press that some people were chanting ‘Valle Giulia’ and ‘potere operaio’ during a demonstration in Pisa²⁴.

This is an explicit act of memory work: memory agents were retrieving symbolic material available in the public sphere (which already contained media accounts of a ‘battle’ in Valle Giulia), appropriating the representation of the event, and attaching to it certain specific connotations and spreading the story as a narrative example of what the movement should become. Due to this process, the words ‘Valle Giulia’ became directly associated not to a place in Rome but to a specific event, immediately historicised through narration.

²² Giurato, L. (1968) Nuovi incidenti stamane davanti alla facoltà di Architettura Roma: dura battaglia a sassate fra migliaia di studenti e poliziotti. *Stampa sera*, 2 Mar. p.1; Franci, G. (1968) Violenta battaglia nel centro di Roma fra studenti e polizia: centinaia di feriti. *La stampa*, 2 Mar. p.1.

²³ ‘La maggior parte degli studenti è impegnata in un ampio dibattito sui temi di fondo. Ci sono stati vivaci scambi di idee ma la discussione non si è mai allontanata da un clima civile. Evidentemente però ci sono gruppi che hanno interesse a fomentare incidenti fra gli stessi studenti affinché possa rendersi impossibile qualsiasi incontro costruttivo volto a ricercare l'intesa. E questi non possono essere che i fascisti’. B., M. (1968) La facoltà d'Architettura a Roma incendiata da teppisti fascisti. *Stampa sera*, 15 Mar. p.13.

²⁴ N., G. (1968) A Pisa gli studenti entrano in stazione bloccano i treni, feriscono viaggiatori. *La Stampa*, 16 Mar. p.17.

The movement also shows the capacity to use a wide set of means of cultural production to conduct this 'memory work'. In May 1968, the press had already mentioned the organisation of movement events in which a self-made documentary on the 'Battle of Valle Giulia' was screened:

At the Unione Culturale (via Battisti 4) tonight at 9.30 pm, the 'Newsreel of the Student Movement number 1' will screen a documentary on the events from March 1st to 15th, [called] 'From Valle Giulia to the battle with the fascists of the Law Department'.²⁵

This was around the time that Pietrangeli's song was released. The song, which starts with a critique of the school system, recounts the experience of the battle against the police, and, after celebrating the fact that this time it was the police who ran away, ends by rephrasing the initial critique, which now does not only addresses the school system but also the 'masters' class' in general. The mnemonic project is obvious. Valle Giulia became instrumental in shaping the identity of the movement in a specific direction: the project of radicalisation promoted by some of the most politicised parts of the movement. Valle Giulia becomes the symbol of those, inside the movement, that do not plan to 'run' from the police, but, rather, at generalising a strategy of confrontation. To carry a sign with the words 'Valle Giulia', hundreds of kilometres from Rome, means to claim responsibility for what the students did on March 1st and to imply that it will happen again. An event, in this way, becomes the symbol of an identity that is proposed to the movement as a whole, the symbol of a direction that should be taken, according to some, by the whole movement.

Here, the movement took an active role in the field of public memory. It participated in the public debate, promoted its own version of the recent past, and used technology to reinforce its narrative. In particular, some groups within the movement carried out specific mnemonic projects. In fact, the recent past, especially a contentious past, can become a resource for the definition of identity; therefore, a movement as such and specific actors inside a movement can establish a certain representation of the past, which becomes a narrative that can draw the borders of belonging.

And the results come: less than a year later, when new occupations began at the University of

²⁵ 'All'Unione Culturale (via Battisti 4) stasera alle 21,30 sarà proiettato "il Cinegiornale del Movimento studentesco numero 1", documentario sui fatti dal 1° al 15 marzo, ovvero "Da Valle Giulia sino alla battaglia con i fascisti alla facoltà di Giurisprudenza"' - Anonymous (1968) *Stampa sera*, 31 May p.2.

Rome, there were immediate references to ‘the events of Valle Giulia’²⁶. The event, in time, becomes a reference for every episode of contention within the university:

The clashes are perhaps the most serious to have happened in Rome since the episode of Valle Giulia²⁷.

It took only one year to cement the identification between the name of a place, ‘Valle Giulia’, and the events of March 1st 1968. Now, when a journalist writes ‘Valle Giulia’, the reader can assume that the article is referring to that event, and not to a park in central Rome, even if the context is not the student movement.²⁸ In 1975, for the first time, this symbol outgrew the limits of the student movement, and became a reference for episodes of social contention of different kinds, like hooliganism²⁹ or youth rebellion in general³⁰.

Pasolini's poem, after the time of its public introduction³¹, disappeared for some years. The first reference to it appeared in 1978, by a Chilean director presenting a film on the dictatorship.³² In the same year, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary, there are the first historicised reconstructions of 1968 and the first attempts to analyse '68, and its symbol ‘Valle Giulia’, from the outside. The events are represented as a passage:

But Valle Giulia had triggered a fuse in a powder keg. [...]. The occupied departments, the endless assemblies in which everyone took the floor to free themselves from a weight, had coagulated in an unexpected way in the militant ‘cadres’ of the left coming out of the FGCI³³ and an ‘unpoliticised’ generation still wearing suits and ties that ‘became conscious’ and mobilised singing the Internationale. [...] The demonstrations became solid walls. The winning slogan was ‘University belongs to the people’, together with keywords about Mao's China, Ho Chi Minh's and Giap's Vietnam, Fidel Castro's Cuba and Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara's Latin America. [...] The students that had wanted to break the encirclement and that had been able to identify the malfunctions that the

²⁶ ‘i fatti di Valle Giulia’ Peroli (1969) Tensione all'ateneo di Roma Di nuovo in pericolo la riforma? *La Stampa*, 13 Feb. p.11.

²⁷ ‘Gli incidenti sono forse i più gravi avvenuti a Roma dopo l'episodio di Valle Giulia’ Zanotti, L. (1971) Duri scontri all'ateneo di Roma 60 feriti, tre agenti sequestrati. *La Stampa*, 3 Feb. p.1.

²⁸ Fabbri, M. (1973) Merlino, imputato della strage di Milano indiziato con Preda per la 'pista nera'. *La Stampa*, 31 Jul. p.9

²⁹ Eco, U. (1975) I commandos dello stadio. *La Stampa*, 28 Mar. p.3.

³⁰ Anonymous (1975) La guerra dei giovani. *La Stampa*, 22 Apr. p.1.

³¹ Fr., G. (1968) Pasolini contro gli studenti filocinesi ‘Avete facce di figli di papà. Vi odio’. *La Stampa*, 12 Jun. p.3.

³² Anonymous (1978) Combatte con i film contro i tiranni. *La Stampa*, 19 Jan. p.20.

³³ *Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana*, youth branch of the Italian Communist Party.

ruling class of then did not want to consider, had no other merit. Thinking about an imminent 'revolution', they tried, without succeeding, to form an alliance with the workers of the North, with the South, and with the marginalised peasants, they closed themselves in the 'ghetto' of extremism, they tore themselves apart in groups, with everyone trying individually to pass from the movement to the organisation and then to the party. Some looked to China and at Mao's thought; other looked back at the 'Red October'. Slowly but inexorably many were recuperated, some from the parties of the historical left, others from the capitalism that they had fought. What remained were the 'revolutionaries', marginal and misunderstood, putting together the steps towards the 'great day'. And who in Valle Giulia had used rocks and sticks against the police, in two months had moved on Molotov cocktails and barricades.³⁴

'Valle Giulia' is represented as the event that caused the 'powder keg' to explode, as the catalyst for a transformation in the movement. Before that, there was the will to 'break the encirclement' of the old politicians' immobilism in order to pinpoint Italy's unsolved problems and trigger innovation and change. After that, there was extremism, Maoism, communism, and violence. This representation of the two different '68s would appear quite frequently in the following years, and it would have echoes in all the sectors of the public discourse, even historiography. In fact, one of these representations, that might be described as the *68-counterculture* (the representation of an age of general change of fashions, an explosion of creativity able to cross ideological borders, and a great generational process of modernisation) resonates with the "slick" version of the youth protest, of the changes in culture and lifestyle that affected Italian society in the late '60s' already identified by the scholarship (Armani 2005), while the other representation, that might be called the *68-struggle* (the representation of political and social

³⁴ 'Ma Valle Giulia aveva innescato una miccia in una polveriera. [...] Le facoltà occupate, le assemblee interminabili e in cui tutti prendevano la parola per liberarsi come da un peso sullo stomaco, avevano coagulato in modo inaspettato "quadri" militanti della sinistra usciti dalla Fgci e una generazione "apolitica" ancora in giacca e cravatta che "prendevo coscienza" e si mobilitava al canto dell'Internazionale. [...] Le manifestazioni divennero muri compatti. "L'università è del popolo" fu uno slogan vincente, insieme alle parole d'ordine sulla Cina di Mao, il Vietnam di Ho Chi-minh e Giap, Cuba di Fidel Castro e l'America latina di Ernesto «Che» Guevara. [...] Gli studenti che avevano pensato di rompere l'accerchiamento e che erano stati capaci di individuare guasti che la classe dirigente di allora non aveva voluto considerare tali, non ebbero altro merito. Pensando ad una "rivoluzione" ormai prossima tentarono, senza riuscirci, l'aggancio con gli operai del Nord, gli emarginati del Sud e i contadini, si chiusero nel "ghetto" dell'estremismo, si lacerarono in gruppi, tentando ognuno per la sua strada di passare dal movimento all'organizzazione e poi al partito. Alcuni con gli occhi alla Cina e il pensiero a Mao; altri con lo sguardo indietro all' "Ottobre russo". Lentamente ma inesorabilmente molti furono recuperati chi dai partiti della sinistra storica, chi dal capitalismo che avevano combattuto. Rimasero i "rivoluzionari", emarginati e incompresi, a cucire le tappe per l'avvento del "grande giorno". E chi a Valle Giulia aveva usato sassi e bastoni contro la polizia, arrivò alle molotov e alle barricate già due mesi dopo.' Carbone, F. (1978) Quel marzo '68, una rivolta che aprì la contestazione. *La Stampa*, 4 Mar. p.9.

mobilisations, characterised by an exasperated ideologism, by the predominance of sectarian groups, by a general climate of violence) is more similar to the idea of 'violent and nihilistic evolution' commonly associated with the '70s (Armani 2012).

Indeed, the *68-counterculture* as it was represented on television³⁵, raised some criticisms:

Nobody denies the limits of 1968 – Ugo Gregoretti said after a segment on the Hot Autumn and the events of Valle Giulia with an audio comment consisting in the sweet voice of Joan Baez — but representing it in this saccharine way it means to falsify it. It looks almost as if you want to exorcise it.³⁶

The early '80s, as I have already shown, were the years of forgetting. The representations that started to emerge in '78 were presented in the public sphere in 1985, with a comparison being made with a new wave of student mobilisation. On that occasion a new representation was born that would appear many times in the following year: the comparison between the ideological and violent youth of '68 and the peaceful and pragmatic youth of the present. Furthermore, for the first time Pasolini's poem on Valle Giulia was used to reinforce this characterisation.

The young people that made 1968 were, in fact, a small minority, everything but representative of the feelings and aspirations of the generation to which they belonged. [...] 1968 became, for a generation of intellectuals, or pseudo-intellectuals, what for other generations the wars and the partisan struggles had been: a myth legitimising biographical itineraries and careers. [...] The young people born in 1968 are now 17 years old, they do not think about revolution, they do not know what to do with imagination in power. And yet a prophet had spoken. The prophet of that generation had understood and admonished. Even if his voice had been a shout in the desert. The protesters did not believe Pier Paolo Pasolini's words: beware, yours is a false revolution.³⁷

³⁵ Anonymous (1979) Come eravamo nel '68 e vita di omosessuale. *La Stampa*, 15 Nov. p.19; Anonymous (1980) Vecchio festival, quante illusioni fai rivivere tu. *La Stampa*, 3 Feb. p.17

³⁶ 'Nessuno nega i limiti del sessantotto — ha detto Ugo Gregoretti dopo uno spezzone sull'autunno caldo e i fatti di valle Giulia con un commento sonoro affidato alla voce dolce di Joan Baez — ma riproporlo in questo modo caramelloso è falsificatorio. Sembra quasi che abbiate voluto esorcizzarlo'. Anonymous (1984) Tv trentenne. *La Stampa*, 4 Jan. p.1.

³⁷ 'I giovani che fecero il '68 furono, infatti, una piccola minoranza nient'affatto rappresentativa dei sentimenti e delle aspirazioni della generazione alla quale appartenevano. [...] Il '68 è così diventato per una generazione di intellettuali, o pseudo-tali, quello che per altre generazioni sono state le guerre e le lotte partigiane: un mito che legittima itinerari biografici e carriere. [...] I giovani nati nel Sessantotto hanno oggi diciassette anni, non pensano alla rivoluzione, non sanno che farsene dell'immaginazione al potere. Eppure un profeta lo aveva detto. Il profeta di quella generazione aveva capito e ammonito. Anche se la sua voce era stata un grido nel deserto. I contestatori

In 1985, after the break of the 'reflux', '68 became historicised, and it became a reference for contemporary movements. Furthermore, the break created an effect of perspective: everything that happened in the '60s and '70s, being far in past, was put on the same plane, given the same distance from the present. Therefore, it is possible to find, in a newspaper page on the student movement of '85, an article about veterans of '77 speaking about '68.³⁸

From now on, there are no more breaks in the representations, which maintain a certain homogeneity in time. The various examples of the perspective effect, with frequent confusions between '68 and '77³⁹, show the separation between the past ('the long '68') and the present (the '90s and 2000s).

After the first example of 1985, Valle Giulia as the symbol of '68 becomes a permanent reference for every student mobilisation, both on the level of pop culture (the film director Gabriele Muccino used images from the 'battle of Valle Giulia' in the credits of his film 'Come te nessuno mai' – a film about some contemporary teenagers and their love stories during the occupation of a school⁴⁰), and on the level of reality.

There are references to Valle Giulia in the articles about the student movement of 1989-90, the so-called 'Pantera'. The same department of architecture was occupied, triggering an almost inevitable reference to the events of 1968⁴¹, and, when a student decided to write a letter to protest against the occupation, she referred to '68 and used Pasolini's words, citing them literally.⁴²

On the other hand, this comparison is mitigated by the common conception of the difference between the ideological youth of '68 and the pragmatic youth of 1990.⁴³

Quite a similar scenario occurred in the following big wave of mobilisation, in 2005: this time, the comparison was introduced on the basis of a difference: the fact that the department of

non avevano creduto alle parole di Pier Paolo Pasolini: attenti, la vostra è una falsa rivoluzione.' Anselmo, M. (1985) Figli del Sessantotto dove andate? *La Stampa*, 9 Sep. p.3

³⁸ Sapegno, P. (1985) E a Bologna i reduci di Autonomia ora criticano gli anni di piombo. *La Stampa*, 17 Nov. p.2.

³⁹ Sapegno, P. (1985) E a Bologna i reduci di Autonomia ora criticano gli anni di piombo. *La Stampa*, 17 Nov. p.2; Anonymous (1988) A Valle Giulia, ricordano il '68. *La Stampa*, 2 Mar. p.2.

⁴⁰ B., I. (1999) Romani borghesi di sinistra. *La Repubblica*, 2 Oct. p.44; Montefoschi, G. (1999) Slang romano, che delizia. *Il Corriere della sera*, 14 Oct. p.47.

⁴¹ G., M. (1990) Caro cossiga ci devi ascoltare. *La Repubblica*, 20 Jan. p.9.

⁴² Anonymous (1990) Lettere. *La Repubblica*, 20 Jan. p.10.

⁴³ Grignetti, F. (1990) La Pantera non graffia. *La Stampa*, 28 Jan. p.7.

architecture was *not* occupied.⁴⁴ Then, the presence in a demonstration of a veteran, Piero Bernocchi⁴⁵, who was a student in '68 and now leads COBAS (a small trade union centre), triggered a debate on veterans⁴⁶ and on the role of the Right in '68 and in the present movement⁴⁷.

Valle Giulia is cited as a reference even when students mobilise abroad, like the French in 2006⁴⁸. But the greatest number of references came in 2008, on the 40th anniversary of 1968 and the largest student mobilisation of the last two decades. During the months of the so-called 'Onda', Valle Giulia was used as a reference on anti-fascism⁴⁹, on meritocracy⁵⁰, and, above all, on violence: some isolated and not particularly heated clashes with the police⁵¹ were deemed sufficient to drop on the movement all the weight of the memory of violence and terrorism linked to '68⁵². On all these occasions, and many others, the narrative of the difference between '68 and the non-violent and pragmatic youth of the present is always raised⁵³, sometimes with the addition of a qualitative difference: movements, now, are less important or serious than they were.⁵⁴ Pasolini's poem played a particular role in this context. In some rare cases, it is treated as a literary and political work, to be analysed in its complexity⁵⁵ (the most committed in this regard is the veteran Adriano Sofri⁵⁶). But most of the time Pasolini's poem on Valle Giulia is not considered as an object of discussion, but instead as a narrative filter, as a point in an anti-68 argument⁵⁷, that gains strength when it is considered forgotten and

⁴⁴ Anonymous (2005) Valle Giulia ora è 'arancione'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 26 Oct. p.5.

⁴⁵ Vecchi, G. G. (2005) Bernocchi, dal '68 al 2005 'Solo in piazza io respiro'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 26 Oct. p.5.

⁴⁶ Caccia, F. (2005) La 'sindrome Bernocchi' secondo i ragazzi del '68. *Il Corriere della sera*, 27 Oct. p.1-7.

⁴⁷ Caccia, F. (2005) Giovani in piazza, dubbi a destra: vanno capiti. *Il Corriere della sera*, 28 Oct. p.13.

⁴⁸ Merghetti, P. (2006) 'La stessa voglia di utopia del Sessantotto'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 12 Mar. p.15.

⁴⁹ Zagaria, C. (2008) Banchi, lavagne e fumogeni 'Ragazzi, ora facciamo la storia'. *La Repubblica*, 29 Oct. p.5 (Napoli).

⁵⁰ Sofri, A. (2008) Il Paese del demerito. *La Repubblica*, 4 Nov. p.1-26.

⁵¹ Bonini, C. (2008) 'Cari ragazzi non vi odio ma vi sbagliate'. *La Repubblica*, 30 Oct. p.1-29-30-31; Coppola, P. (2008) 'Io, sbirro nel Sessantotto e la profezia di Pasolini'. *La Repubblica*, 30 Oct. p.30.

⁵² Roncone, F. (2008) Da Lama cacciato a 'Fausto buffone' I trent'anni di lotta di Lettere 'rossa'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 28 May p.8-9.

⁵³ Placido, B. (1997) Era necessaria quella bomba su Hiroshima? *La Repubblica*, 26 Oct. p.32; Magrelli, V. (2001) Questi studenti così concreti. *Il Corriere della sera*, 15 Dec. p.49.

⁵⁴ Anonymous (1998) Gli squatter sono fuori dal sistema. *La Repubblica*, 9 Apr. p.18.

⁵⁵ V., L. (1998) 'Pier Paolo Pasolini come fu astuto'. *La Repubblica*, 1 Mar. p.33; Siciliano, E (1998) Pasolini e il '68 di Ferrara. *La Repubblica*, 2 Mar. p.1; Anonymous (1998) Pasolini: Siciliano contro Ferrara. *Il Corriere della sera*, 16 Jul. p.35.

⁵⁶ Sofri, A. (2005) Pasolini L' Italia che aveva smesso di amare. *La Repubblica*, 12 Oct. p.55.

⁵⁷ Arbasino, A. (2001) Quando la pedofilia non è provocazione. *La Repubblica*, 13 Mar. p.1.

censored⁵⁸, able to account for the bourgeois nature of '68.⁵⁹

The poem, which was never cited for its first ten years, has entered the general canon of social conflict. It is quoted in reference to the students, in cases of a mobilisation⁶⁰ or simply of an anniversary⁶¹; with the hooligans⁶² ('policemen do not look forward to going to the football stadium terraces – we are waiting for a new Pasolini to repeat the considerations of Valle Giulia'⁶³); with the farmers (both to call for solidarity with the police⁶⁴ and to say that, this time, work and tradition are on the other side⁶⁵). It becomes a filter through which to analyse every kind of relationship between citizens (especially youths) and police. Indeed, it was cited when a youth failed to stop at a roadblock⁶⁶; when students protested against anti-drug searches in schools⁶⁷; when a young person died in prison⁶⁸; in a book on the history of '113' emergency telephone number⁶⁹; when the film 'La Haine' was released⁷⁰; and when a janitor complained about the mess after an occupation⁷¹. The 2001, the G8 summit in Genova became a particular occasion to quote Pasolini, with mass protests, clashes between police and demonstrators, a boy shot and killed by a *carabiniere* and dozens of policemen tried for torture.⁷² Even right-wing prime minister Silvio Berlusconi quoted Pasolini⁷³ – as did his minister of Justice Roberto Castelli⁷⁴ – while others challenged the comparison, stating that there was no longer a class

⁵⁸ Anselmo, M. (1988) Pasolini e il Sessantotto la 'censura' continua. *Stampa sera*, 25 Jan. p.1.

⁵⁹ Anonymous (1998) Gli squatter sono fuori dal sistema. *La Repubblica*, 9 Apr. p.18.

⁶⁰ Bonini, C. (2008) 'Cari ragazzi non vi odio ma vi sbagliate'. *La Repubblica*, 30 Oct. p.1-29-30-31; Coppola, P. (2008) 'Io, sbirro nel Sessantotto e la profezia di Pasolini'. *La Repubblica*, 30 Oct. p.30.

⁶¹ Conti, P. (1993) Dimenticare Valle Giulia? *Il Corriere della sera*, 5 Mar. p.29.

⁶² Serra, M. (2003) Quei poliziotti braccati. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.1; Romano, S. (2007) Con Pasolini e i poliziotti a Valle Giulia e negli stadi. *Il Corriere della sera*, 24 Nov. p.51.

⁶³ 'i poliziotti che non bruciano dalla voglia di andare in curva - si aspetta un neo-Pasolini che rifaccia le considerazioni di Valle Giulia.' Mura, G. (1992) Matarrese il pentito. *La Repubblica*, 29 Nov. p.42.

⁶⁴ Scalfari, E. (1997) Il letame nel latte e i veleni di Telecom. *La Repubblica*, 30 Nov. p.1.

⁶⁵ Colombo, F. (1997) Pasolini chiamato alla guerra del latte. *La Repubblica*, 3 Dec. p.13.

⁶⁶ Serra, M. (2000) Quelle colpe degli adulti. *La Repubblica*, 23 Jul. p.1.

⁶⁷ Dazzi, Z. (2003) Ferrante: la polizia nelle scuole non basta a fermare la droga. *La Repubblica*, 11 Nov. p.3 (Milano).

⁶⁸ Collura, M. (2008) Uno squillo nell'alba di Federico. *Il Corriere della sera*, 3 Feb. p.20-21.

⁶⁹ Anonymous (2007) In un libro i quarant'anni del 113. *La Repubblica*, 5 Jun. p.33.

⁷⁰ Kezich, T. (1995) Mezzogiorno di sangue. *Il Corriere della sera*, 23 Sep. p.31.

⁷¹ Giannattasio, M. (2005) La bidella: hanno rotto tutto, una volta non era così. *Il Corriere della sera*, 15 Dec. p.3.

⁷² Maltese, C. (2001) Le due facce dei violenti. *La Repubblica*, 22 Jul. p.1; Persano, B. (2002) Tremila divise invisibili con la regia di Fiorioli. *La Repubblica*, 21 Jul. p.4 (Genova).

⁷³ Luzi, G. (2001) G8 a Genova, colpa dell'Ulivo. *La Repubblica*, 17 Jun. p.2; Kezich, T. (2002) Genova, per chi suonò la campana della violenza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 15 Jun. p.30; Anonymous (2001) Quell'intervento di Pasolini. *Il Corriere della sera*, 20 Jul. p.2.

⁷⁴ Jerkov, B. (2002) Il ministro degli Interni avverte Sono vicino ai miei uomini. *La Repubblica*, 30 Apr. p.6; Breda, M. (2002) Napoli, Ciampi invita i magistrati a fare presto. *Il Corriere della sera*, 4 May p.3.

difference between a student and a policeman⁷⁵. This theme, the end of the class cleavage, which is the point of Pasolini's argument, was already there before 2001, and it would be revived again later.⁷⁶

Pasolini's words are quoted in articles about the No TAV protests in Val di Susa⁷⁷, and, in general, in every article dealing with the relationship between the social and political Left and the police.⁷⁸ Its hegemonic position was certified when it was quoted by the militants of a social centre, who argued that now, unlike in '68, the class difference is in favour of the policemen.⁷⁹ The canon is so strongly established that social movements find it easier to build their position around it than to challenge it.

A big contribution to this hegemonic role comes from the image of Pasolini as a dissident, of which the poem about Valle Giulia is one of the main points⁸⁰:

Everyone remembers the main stages of his dissent from some mainstream progressivism, from textbooks and rituals: from the poem dedicated to the policemen (and not to students) of Valle Giulia, to the positions against abortion and so on.⁸¹

The memory of the 'battle of Valle Giulia' is so strong that it remains associated with the place even when the context is totally different. The park becomes a 'lieu de mémoire' (Nora 2006, Isnenghi 1997), with references to the 'British School of Rome, next to the department of

⁷⁵ Imarisio, M. (2001) Paura tra i giovani delle forze dell'ordine: 'Ma ci tireranno sangue infetto?'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 20 Jul. p.8; Stella, G. A. (2001) Le tute le divise. *Il Corriere della sera*, 21 Jul. p.1-6; Rampoldi, G. (2001) I celerini e i giorni della rabbia. *La Repubblica*, 28 Jul. p.1; Siciliano, E. (2001) La speranza ritrovata dopo il sangue di Genova. *La Repubblica*, 24 Aug. p.13; Anonymous (2003) Ripensare la polizia le ferite aperte del G8. *La Repubblica*, 30 Apr. p.8.

⁷⁶ Conti, P. (1993) Dimenticare Valle Giulia? *Il Corriere della sera*, 5 Mar. p.29; Bonini, C. (2007) Vita da poliziotto - 'Noi, servi dei servi dei servi'. *La Repubblica*, 25 Nov. p.31-32-33; De Cataldo, G. (2007) Vita da poliziotto - Gli sbirri e gli stradaioi disperazioni allo specchio. *La Repubblica*, 25 Nov. p.31-33; Bonini, C. (2008) 'Cari ragazzi non vi odio ma vi sbagliate'. *La Repubblica*, 30 Oct. p.1-29-30-31.

⁷⁷ Michilli, L. (2005) La Margherita si schiera: 'Solidarietà agli agenti aggressioni ingiustificabili'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 9 Dec. p.3.

⁷⁸ Conti, P. (1992) Caro lettore hai ragione. *Il Corriere della sera*, 1 Oct. p.21; Luzzatto Fegiz, M. (1998) De André: io anarchico dico no ai 99 Posse. *Il Corriere della sera*, 29 Jul. p.31.

⁷⁹ Arachi, A. (1992), 'i bulloni sono partiti da qui'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 17 Oct. p.40.

⁸⁰ Speroni, M. (1993) La vita è sogno vinto dal potere. *Il Corriere della sera*, 18 Nov. p.52; La Capria, R. (1995) Libertà dall'ideologia tiranna. *Il Corriere della sera*, 15 May p.25; Sofri, A. (2000) Pasolini, scandalo senza eredi. *La Repubblica*, 3 Nov. p.1; Erbani, F. (2000) Pasolini. *La Repubblica*, 7 May p.37; Parisini, F. (2004) Lo sfacelo secondo Pasolini. *La Repubblica*, 11 May, p.9(Bologna); Chiappori, S. (2005) 'Il mio Pasolini, poeta corsaro'. *La Repubblica*. 19 Oct. p.13 (Milano).

⁸¹ 'Tutti ricordano le principali 'stazioni' del suo dissenso da un certo progressismo di massa, da manuale e poi da rituale: dalla poesia per i poliziotti (e non per gli studenti) di Valle Giulia, alle posizioni antiabortiste e via seguitando.' Vassalli, S. (1993) Pasolini: vita di un ex santo. *La Repubblica*, 24 Sep. p.42.

architecture in Valle Giulia, scene of our most fearless sixty-eight'⁸² or to the 'sixty-eight staircase'⁸³ of the department. Its role as a symbol of '68 goes beyond the actual facts, and it becomes a reference even when the article concerns Turin⁸⁴.

Valle Giulia is mainly represented as a passage, as the end of a happy age, associated with the *68-counterculture*, stopped by the intervention of politics ('the freaks appeared in Valle Giulia during '68, their myth was "peace, love and music". But politics arrived. And everything changed.'⁸⁵); as an age in which young people coming from the Left and the Right were united⁸⁶, until politics came, dividing everyone and ruining everything⁸⁷:

Valle Giulia, when the project was still about bringing left-wing and right-wing young people together, taking them away from the control of MSI⁸⁸ and PCI. It is known how it finished. The repression was very hard, and right after that, for defence or attack, the hard-core clash started. [...] The ex kids of the right guessed that it was a trap. [...] Those with the power wanted to break the link between left-wing and right-wing young people to start the 'opposed extremism', a logic that bloodied the streets and the squares of Italy for years.⁸⁹

The neo-fascist group uses this memory, in an instrumental way, as a reference to grant access

⁸² 'British School di Roma, a fianco della facoltà di architettura a Valle Giulia, teatro del nostro più ardimentoso Sessantotto' · Laurenzi, L. (1992) Sua altezza a colazione alla corte del Ciarra. *La Repubblica*, 29 Sep. p.22.

⁸³ 'scalinata sessantottina' · Giuliani, F. (1999) Musica, teatro, cultura parte l'Estate Romana. *La Repubblica*, 11 Jun. p.8; Rutiloni, B. (2001) Videoarte e deejay E a valle Giulia torna la kermesse. *La Repubblica*, 21 Sep. p.10-11 (Roma).

⁸⁴ Pasti, D. (1997) Torino, prove di rivoluzione. *La Repubblica*, 25 Nov. p.40.

⁸⁵ 'I freak comparvero a Valle Giulia durante il '68, il loro mito era "peace, love and music", pace, amore e musica. Ma arrivò la politica. E cambiò tutto' · Caccia, F. & D'Ottavio, P. (1997) Dimmi di che tribù sei. *La Repubblica*, 10 Dec. p.4.

⁸⁶ L., A. (1996) Quando la destra guarda a sinistra. *La Repubblica*, 22 May p.8; Chiaberge, R. (1996) Da camerata a compagno: uniamoci nella lotta al neocapitalismo. *Il Corriere della sera*, 24 May p.31; Caccia, F. (1998) Arriva Merlino, rivolta a scuola. *La Repubblica*, 8 Jun. p.3; Conti, P. (2003) 'Con i fascisti a mani nude, mi chiamavano spezzaferro'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 26 Jun. p.15; Caccia, F. (2005) Giovani in piazza, dubbi a destra: vanno capiti. *Il Corriere della sera*, 28 Oct. p.13; Erban, F. (2008) Quei neri più a sinistra dei rossi così Roma ha scelto i fascio-comunisti. *La Repubblica*, 30 Apr. p.8; Garibaldi, A. (2008) 'Tornano' Delle Chiaie e Merlino, lezione sul '68. *Il Corriere della sera*, 1 Jul. p.6; Salvia, L. (2008) Destra divisa sulla contestazione. *Il Corriere della sera*, 18 Oct. p.3.

⁸⁷ Gorodisky, D. (1994) Sessantotto, Evola e Marcuse uniti nella lotta? *Il Corriere della sera*, 16 Dic. p.33

⁸⁸ *Movimento Sociale Italiano* ('Italian Social Movement'), neo-fascist party from 1946 to 1992.

⁸⁹ 'Valle Giulia', quando ancora il progetto era far avvicinare i giovani di destra e di sinistra, sottraendoli al controllo del Msi e del Pci. Come finì è noto. La repressione fu durissima e, subito dopo, per difesa o per attacco, ebbe inizio lo scontro duro. [...] Azzardano gli ex ragazzi di destra che fu una trappola: [...] gestiva il potere aveva voluto spezzare il collegamento tra giovani di destra e di sinistra per dare il via agli "opposti estremismi", una logica che per anni avrebbe insanguinato le strade e le piazze d'Italia.' Mazzocchi, S. (2006) Testimoni di un sogno spezzato in un film i protagonisti del '68.' *La Repubblica*, 9 May p.51.

to the movement⁹⁰.

Valle Giulia is represented as the symbol of the passage towards the '68-struggle⁹¹, characterised by politicisation⁹², 'violence'⁹³ and 'terrorism', the beginning of the dark '1970s'⁹⁴.

'1968 is not only Valle Giulia' continues Father Mazzi. [...] 'My 1968? For me it was that of the millions of people that had the courage to throw their hearts over the obstacle, spreading the capacity to plan, to think, for freedom culture.'⁹⁵

The season of 'student anti-authoritarianism' ended on the 1st March, when in Rome the battle of Valle Giulia between the students and police took place. 1968 becomes a national phenomenon and related to the international dimension of the French May. In Trento, in the department of sociology, one of the leaders is called Renato Curcio: he will be one of the founders of the Red Brigades. 1968 goes towards the politicisation of the Hot Autumn and some of its men go towards a fate of death and defeat.⁹⁶

The narrative is clear: at first, 1968 was 'a ferment, expressed by music rather than by Marxist texts'⁹⁷, and then Valle Giulia happened, marking 'a crucial passage in the relationship between '68 and violence'⁹⁸ paving the way towards terrorism.

Paradoxically, one of those who has praised Valle Giulia and criticised the undervaluation of '68-struggle in a TV documentary is Shel Shapiro, a pop singer and protagonist of the '68-

⁹⁰ Zagaria, C. (2008) Banchi, lavagne e fumogeni 'Ragazzi, ora facciamo la storia'. *La Repubblica*, 29 Oct. p.5 (Napoli).

⁹¹ Medail, C. (1998) Capanna: ma il '68 non visse di solo Marx. *Il Corriere della sera*, 24 Feb. p.31

⁹² Lilli, L. (1998) Addio all'uomo ombra. *La Repubblica*, 20 Jun. p.34

⁹³ Mieli, P. (2004) Valerio Morucci e quel sasso lanciato contro la polizia. *Il Corriere della sera*, 18 Nov. p.43

⁹⁴ Anonymous (1998) Gli squatter sono fuori dal sistema. *La Repubblica*, 9 Apr. p.18

⁹⁵ 'Il '68 non è soltanto Valle Giulia' dice ancora Don Mazzi. [...] 'Il mio '68? Per me c'è stato quello di milioni di persone che hanno avuto il coraggio di buttare il cuore oltre l'ostacolo, seminando capacità progettuale, pensieri, cultura di libertà'. Pampaloni, L. (2000) Il nostro Sessantotto L'Isolotto ricorda. *La Repubblica*, 6 Jun p.11 (Firenze).

⁹⁶ 'La stagione dell' "antiautoritarismo studentesco" finisce il primo marzo successivo, quando a Roma scoppia la battaglia di Valle Giulia tra polizia e universitari. Il '68 diventa un fenomeno nazionale e si lega alla dimensione internazionale del maggio francese. A Trento, nella Facoltà di sociologia, uno dei leader si chiama Renato Curcio: sarà tra i fondatori delle Brigate Rosse. Il '68 si avvia alla politicizzazione dell'autunno caldo e qualche suo uomo va verso un destino fatto di morte e di sconfitte.' Boffano, E. (1987) Marcuse abitò a Palazzo Campana. *Stampa sera*, 2 Nov. p.9.

⁹⁷ 'un ribollire, espresso più dalla musica che dai testi del marxismo'. Villoresi, Luca (1998) Festa, fuoco e botte ricordando Valle Giulia. *La Repubblica*, 1 Mar. p.32.

⁹⁸ 'un passaggio cruciale nel rapporto del Sessantotto con la violenza'. Villoresi, Luca (1998) Festa, fuoco e botte ricordando Valle Giulia. *La Repubblica*, 1 Mar. p.32.

counterculture:

The Piper⁹⁹, the Molleggiato¹⁰⁰, Morandi wins the Canzonissima¹⁰¹ and only two minutes are dedicated to the events of Valle Giulia: it is a historical falsification. In the 1970s the true energy was not that of the Saturday night TV shows.¹⁰²

The contrast between the '*68-counterculture*' and '*68-struggle*' dominates the field. Film director Bernardo Bertolucci, talking about his film 'The Dreamers', explicitly states his choice to focus on the '*68-counterculture*':

I could not imagine making a film on 1968 with assemblies and slogans. I was interested in the atmosphere that I felt then. Politics was one of the things, together with cinema, rock, sex, the first 'joints'. In my 1968 politics did not predominate.¹⁰³

Columnists are heavily involved in establishing their truth: the narrative of the true and genuine¹⁰⁴ '*68-counterculture*', before Valle Giulia arrived to destroy that and transform it into the ideological¹⁰⁵ and violent '*68-struggle*':

A spark, a will to oppose authoritarianism and the postponed desire to live their lives freely. A dream, a utopia. A hope soon destroyed in the years of wrath. [...] When ideology won over reason, when politicisation killed creativity, when extra-parliamentary groups corrupted demands and fantasies.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Famous nightclub in Rome in the 1960s.

¹⁰⁰ Nickname of rock and roll singer Adriano Celentano.

¹⁰¹ Song contest of the 1960s.

¹⁰² 'Il Piper, il Molleggiato, Morandi che vince a Canzonissima e solo due minuti dedicati ai fatti di Valle Giulia: è un falso storico. Negli anni Sessanta l'energia vera non era quella degli show televisivi del sabato sera.' Parisini, F. (2008) Canto gli anni '60 di Dylan non quelli di Celentano. *La Repubblica*, 8 Feb. p.19 (Bologna).

¹⁰³ 'Non potevo immaginare di fare un film sul '68 con le assemblee e gli slogan. A me interessava l'atmosfera che io sentii allora. La politica era una delle cose insieme a cinema, rock, sesso, le prime "canne". Nel mio '68 non c'era il predominio della politica.' D'Agostini, P. (2003) Contro i revisionisti racconto il meglio del '68, *La Repubblica*, 8 Oct. p.47,

¹⁰⁴ Merlo, F. (2004) L'eterno Sessantotto di Simon e Garfunkel. *La Repubblica*, 29 Jul. p.1.

¹⁰⁵ Giuliani, F. (2008) Storia vera di Capinera. *La Repubblica*, 1 Feb. p.9 (Roma).

¹⁰⁶ 'Una scintilla, la voglia di opporsi all'autoritarismo imperante e il desiderio non rinviabile di vivere liberamente la propria esistenza. Un sogno, un'utopia. Una speranza presto infranta negli anni del furore [...] quando l'ideologia ebbe la meglio sulla ragione, quando la politicizzazione uccise la creatività, quando i gruppi extraparlamentari fecero degenerare istanze e fantasie'. Mazzocchi, S. (2006) Testimoni di un sogno spezzato in un film i protagonisti del '68. *La Repubblica*, 9 May p.51.

There is almost a sense of revenge, of injustice for a cancelled memory, which, for this reason, becomes stronger.¹⁰⁷

But who are the actors of this representation? They can be divided into three groups: veterans, journalists, and contemporary activists. The latter have been substantially muted: they are subjected to every kind of comparison; yet do not have a voice of their own.

Veterans, instead, are often consulted on commemorations of any kind. Different veterans have different functions, more linked to their actual public role in the present than to their actual participation in the events. In fact, the veterans consulted about Turin were Peppino Ortoleva and Marco Revelli¹⁰⁸, Aldo Agosti and Valeria Dotto¹⁰⁹, while about Rome they were Oreste Scalzone¹¹⁰ and Franco Piperno¹¹¹ (mainly famous for their roles as leaders in Potere Operaio in the early 1970s), Claudio Petruccioli (a senator, whose brother Sergio was more relevant in '68 but is not consulted)¹¹², Paolo Pietrangeli (mostly known as a militant singer)¹¹³, Massimiliano Fuksas¹¹⁴, Gianfranco Molto¹¹⁵, Paolo Ramundo¹¹⁶ e Paolo Portoghesi¹¹⁷ (famous architects), Bernardo Bertolucci (famous film director)¹¹⁸, Claudio Baglioni¹¹⁹ (who had no involvement in the events, but was an architecture student and later became one of the most famous Italian pop singers), Antonello Venditti¹²⁰ (famous singer, that uses his

¹⁰⁷ G. S., G. (1997) Labate: incapaci di raccontare quegli anni. *Il Corriere della sera*, 6 Aug. p.31.

¹⁰⁸ Boffano, E. (1987) Marcuse abitò a Palazzo Campana. *Stampa sera*, 2 Nov. p.9.

¹⁰⁹ Pasti, D. (1997) Torino, prove di rivoluzione. *La Repubblica*, 25 Nov. p.40.

¹¹⁰ Munzi, U. (1993) 'Lo rifarei, ma con un po' di comunismo in meno'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 10 Jan. p.28.

¹¹¹ Purgatori, A. (1993) Piperno: 'A volte penso che sia soltanto addormentato'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 10 Jan. p.29.

¹¹² V., L. (1998) 'Tutti urlavamo la polizia spara!'. *La Repubblica*, 1 Mar. p.33.

¹¹³ Martirano, D. (1995) 'Via Bottai a Valle Giulia? Offesa al '68'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 14 Sep. p.17; Garbesi, M. (2000) Valle Giulia, battaglia per il nome. *La Repubblica*, 13 Sep. p.29.

¹¹⁴ Conti, P. (1993) Costa Gavras: sessantottini o arrivisti? *Il Corriere della sera*, 30 Mar. p.29; Fuksas, M. (2002) Valle Giulia e il '68 con Guttuso e Moravia. *La Repubblica*, 27 Sep. p.1(Roma); Mazzocchi, S. (2005) Fuksas e gli anni dell' odio Anch' io impugnai il bastone. *La Repubblica*, 4 Feb. p.25; Fuksas, M. (2008) E Moravia fu fischiato dai sessantottini. *La Repubblica*, 25 Jan. p.42; Garibaldi, A. (2008) Fuksas: 'Nessun eskimo, sembravamo impiegati statali'. *Il Corriere della sera*. 28 Feb. p.47.

¹¹⁵ Casalini, S. (2002) 'I nostri blitz artistici per la fantasia al potere'. *La Repubblica*, 25 Sep. p.3 (Roma).

¹¹⁶ L. R., O. (2006) Quei giorni di carisma e creatività. *La Repubblica*, 27 Jun. p.31.

¹¹⁷ Mambelli, R. (2008) 'In cima al campanile di Sant' Ivo quel febbraio in cui scoppiò il '68'. *La Repubblica*, 21 Feb. p.11 (Roma).

¹¹⁸ Manin, G. (2003) 'Ma con il mio '68 non sarò in gara'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 8 Jun. p.35; D'Agostini, P. (2003) Contro i revisionisti racconto il meglio del '68, *La Repubblica*, 8 Oct. p.47; Aspesi, N. (2003) Quei sognatori del '68. *La Repubblica*, 2 Sep. p.1; Montini, F. (2004) Amarcord il Sessantotto i racconti di Bertolucci. *La Repubblica*, 15 Jun. p.12; D'Agostini, P. (2007) Bernardo Bertolucci Io, Moretti e quel ladro di Pasolini. *La Repubblica*, 26 Apr. p.57; D'Agostini, P. (2008) Erano giorni liberi Oggi siamo tutti anestetizzati. *La Repubblica*, 12 Apr. p.57.

¹¹⁹ Picozza, C. (2004) Io baglioni e la mia laurea di architetto. *La Repubblica*, 25 Jun. p.4(Roma); Videtti, G. (2005) La popstar e il professore Ora possiamo parlare d'amore. *La Repubblica*, 1 Dec. p.56.

¹²⁰ Cazzullo, A. (2005) Venditti: io, De Gregori e Veltroni quando Berlinguer era la speranza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 27 Mar. p.11.

involvement in the 'battle' in order to legitimise an image of political commitment), Michele Placido (who was a policeman that missed the event because of a change of shifts, but tells this story after becoming a famous actor and director who made a film about '68)¹²¹, Renato Nicolini¹²² (famous local politician and cultural organiser), Paolo Liguori¹²³ (famous journalist), Raul Mordenti (fairly famous local politician)¹²⁴, and Piero Bernocchi¹²⁵. Only Mario Capanna (who was not in Rome on March 1st 1968) is always represented as the leader of the '68 in Milan and not as the leader of Democrazia Proletaria¹²⁶ between the '70s and the '80s or as an anti-nuke activist in the '80s¹²⁷.

The most frequently consulted veterans are thus not the leaders of the movement, but those who have reached a certain level of celebrity in their later careers. While most of these individuals listed probably had some involvement in the events of that day, it is evident that the most frequently consulted among them (Bertolucci, Fuksas and Baglioni) were totally marginal in the movement and are now quoted because of their contemporary fame rather than because of their actual participation in the mobilisation. This seems to depend on the journalistic format: it is perhaps easier to contact a celebrity than an unknown former militant, and it is entertaining for the reader to learn about the rebellious youth of a celebrity. The latter phenomenon might also produce an effect of nostalgia in the reader. Even when the source of an article is an historian presenting his book, as in the case of Guido Crainz (Crainz 2003), he tells the story in the first person, confusing the role of the historian with that of the veteran.¹²⁸ Furthermore, for some veterans their involvement in the 'battle of Valle Giulia' becomes a piece of biographical information that the journalists cite from time to time, as happens with Giuliano Ferrara¹²⁹ (a right-wing journalist and politician), Domenico Carpanini (who died while

¹²¹ Palestini, L. (2007) Io, poliziotto e poi contestatore vi racconto il film della mia vita. *La Repubblica*, 19 Jul. p.41; Montini, F. (2008) Placido, dentro e fuori la rivolta. *La Repubblica*, 25 Mar. p.11(Roma); R., U. (2008) Il '68 scalata al cielo, riproviamoci. *La Repubblica*, 11 Mar. p.4; Giuliano, F. (2008) Musica e memorie il ritorno a Valle Giulia dei protagonisti del '68. *La Repubblica*, 27 Feb. p.13; Grassi, G. (2008) Placido 1968. *Il Corriere della sera*, 14 Oct. p.51; Coppola, P.(2008) 'Io, sbirro nel Sessantotto e la profezia di Pasolini'. *La Repubblica*, 30 Oct. p.30.

¹²² Conti, P. (1993) Costa Gavras: sessantottini o arrivisti? *Il Corriere della sera*, 30 Mar. p.29.

¹²³ Conti, P. (1993) Costa Gavras: sessantottini o arrivisti? *Il Corriere della sera*, 30 Mar. p.29.

¹²⁴ Martirano, D. (1995) 'Via Bottai a Valle Giulia? Offesa al '68'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 14 Sep. p.17.

¹²⁵ Vecchi, G. G. (2005) Bernocchi, dal '68 al 2005 'Solo in piazza io respiro'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 26 Oct. p.5.

¹²⁶ Small party collecting most of the New Left groups, active from 1975 to 1991, when it participated in the foundation of Rifondazione Comunista.

¹²⁷ Conti, P. (1993) Costa Gavras: sessantottini o arrivisti? *Il Corriere della sera*, 30 Mar. p.29.

¹²⁸ Fiori, S. (2003) L'Italia? Un paese da rileggere. *La Repubblica*, 25 Sep. p.50.

¹²⁹ Luna, R. (1994) Ferrara: così perdo un miliardo l'anno. *La Repubblica*, 11 May p.7; Anonymous (1995) Ferrara, no tu no. *La Repubblica*, 10 Nov. p.10; Costa, E. (1997) La 'dentrologia' e la matrioska Ferrara. *La*

running for mayor in Turin in 2001)¹³⁰ and Oreste Scalzone¹³¹. As far as journalists are concerned, the style of the writing is often full of narrative details linked to a general idea of '68', not to any explicit source. The journalist seems to draw on a widespread social memory, of which he is the custodian and at the same time continually reconstructs.

6. The 'Chase of Lama'

The first representations of February 17th 1977 interpreted it as a symptom of the crisis of the PCI, of its inability to speak to the youth or keep up with the pace of the changing society¹³². The members of Autonomia Operaia¹³³ were blamed for the violence, and immediately portrayed as criminals¹³⁴ – accused of '*squadristica*'¹³⁵ violence'¹³⁶, but there is more stress on the party debate than on the movement's. The articles focus mainly on the difficulties of the PCI¹³⁷:

Not even the PCI, with its very receptive antennas, succeeds in picking up the moods of the youth?¹³⁸

An elderly man 'always a PCI member' reflects aloud: 'I have seen the comrades beating up autonomous brats. If our force – being 35% of the Italian voters – translates in such acts, then something is not working: we must have done something wrong'.¹³⁹

Repubblica, 31 Oct. p.13.

¹³⁰ Carpanini, D. (2001) Così al Cavour decisi nel '68 di stare a sinistra. *La Repubblica*, 2 Mar. p.2.

¹³¹ Mazzocchi, S. (2007) Da Valle Giulia al 7 aprile così tramontò Potere operaio. *La Repubblica*, 18 Jan. p.12.

¹³² Santini, F. (1977) Nella città più rossa la rivolta è perdente. *La Stampa*, 19 Feb. p.3.

¹³³ Post-workerist extra-parliamentary movement, led by Toni Negri, Franco 'Bifo' Berardi and others, active between 1976 and 1979. Its history has been collected by Sergio Bianchi and Lanfranco Caminiti (2007, 2008).

¹³⁴ Anonymous (1977) Chi sono i provocatori. *Stampa sera*, 17 Feb. p.2.

¹³⁵ *Squadristico* in the Italiani is the adjective referring to *squadristmo*, that identifies the violence perpetrated by Fascist groups between 1919 and 1924 in particular against trade unions, workers' cooperatives and the socialist, communist and republican parties.

¹³⁶ Scardocchia, G. (1977) Minuto per minuto, il comizio di Lama e la violenta battaglia all'Università. *La Stampa*, 19 Feb. p.1.

¹³⁷ Trovati, G. (1977) Giudizio politico. *La Stampa*, 4 mar. p.1; Trovati, G. (1977) La gravissima crisi rafforza il governo. *La Stampa*, 13 Mar. p.1; R., S. (1977) Da contestazione a guerriglia un anno di Università a Roma. *La Stampa*, 22 Apr. p.2; Gorresio, V. (1977) Annibale a Montecitorio. *La Stampa*, 18 May p.3.

¹³⁸ 'Neppure il PCI dunque, con le sue sensibilissime antenne, riesce più a captare gli umori del mondo giovanile?'. Scardocchia, G. (1977) Minuto per minuto, il comizio di Lama e la violenta battaglia all'Università. *La Stampa*, 19 Feb. p.1.

¹³⁹ 'Un anziano "da sempre iscritto al PCI". riflette a voce alta: "Ho visto i compagni picchiare quei mocciosi di

[Macario, secretary general of the CISL¹⁴⁰] ‘Patience, you need. And dialectic... This is a society that does not allow itself to be suppressed, that does not tolerate imperialisms’ [...] [Benvenuto, secretary general of the UIL¹⁴¹] ‘We ought to have distanced ourselves from the idea that the unions, led by Lama, were going to the students to impose order’.¹⁴²

Even the fairly conservative newspaper *La Stampa*, seemed to be taking the side of the students, or, at least, strongly criticising Lama for his choice to address the movement in the occupied university with a unilateral act that was considered arrogant and paternalistic.

In the articles published in 1977, Luciano Lama, who is now mostly remembered for his role as secretary general of CGIL from 1970 to 1986 (the longest mandate in the history of the organisation), was identified more with the communist party than with the trade union. He had been a member of the Parliament for the PCI and was considered one of the leaders of the party, at a time when the relationship between the CGIL, PCI and PSI was still very strong (Turone 1981). The event was considered more as a rupture of the student movement with the communist party¹⁴³ than with the trade unions (while it would later be used as a reference for episodes of public confrontation between social movements and union leaders¹⁴⁴). In fact, many articles report the ongoing relationship between the FLM¹⁴⁵ and the student movement¹⁴⁶: the conflict was interpreted as a critique of the role of the PCI (that in those months, for the first time in the republic’s history, was not in the opposition during that complex political phase, given that the third Andreotti cabinet was based on the vote of abstention of the

autonomi”. “Se la nostra forza — essere il 35 per cento dell’elettorato italiano — si traduce in simili gesti, allora c’è qualcosa che non funziona: da qualche parte dobbiamo aver sbagliato.” Madeo, L. (1977) Il disastro lasciato dagli occupanti. *La Stampa*, 19 Feb. p.1.

¹⁴⁰ The second largest Italian trade union confederation, traditionally close to the Christian Democracy.

¹⁴¹ The third largest Italian trade union confederation, traditionally close to the Socialist, Social-Democratic and Republican parties.

¹⁴² [Macario, secretary general of the CISL:] “Pazienza ci vuole. E dialettica... Questa è una società che non accetta di farsi sottomettere da nessuno, che non tollera imperialismi” [...] [Benvenuto, secretary general of the UIL:] “Avremmo dovuto prendere le distanze da quelle interpretazioni che descrivevano un sindacato, Lama in testa, che andava tra gli studenti per mettere ordine.” S., R. (1977) Macario sul comizio di Lama. *La Stampa*, 22 Feb. p.3.

¹⁴³ Pucci, E. (1977) Insulti contro Scheda da ferrovieri del Sud. *La Stampa*, 2 Aug. p.2; Casalegno, C. (1978) Un inedito di Casalegno. *La Stampa*, 10 Jun. p.3.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous (1983) Successo per due. *La Stampa*, 19 Jan. p.1.

¹⁴⁵ Union of the federations of the metalworkers belonging to CGIL, CISL and UIL, active between 1973 and 1984.

¹⁴⁶ Bellato, R. (1977) ‘Questo governo può piacere ai leaders, ma non in fabbrica’. *La Stampa*, 7 Mar. p.8; Devecchi, S. (1977) Dopo i noti incidenti al comizio di Lama a Roma. *La Stampa*, 8 Mar. p.2; Anonymous (1977) Notte in treno da Torino a Roma con i metalmeccanici. *Stampa sera*, 2 Dec. p.2.

Communist members of the Parliament)¹⁴⁷. Lama's decision to give a speech at the occupied University is interpreted as a misplaced and arrogant way of establishing a dialogue with the movement. Even inside the Communist Party, there was a tendency for self-criticism regarding 'the lack of comprehension of the mood in the universities' and for the 'delay of the PCI and of the unions in addressing the issues of the youth'¹⁴⁸. Lama himself claimed that his aim was to establish 'a constructive dialogue', which was sabotaged by a violent minority of the students.¹⁴⁹

Also in this case, as it happened immediately after the facts of Valle Giulia emerged, different actors inside the movement started to carry out different mnemonic projects, offering different images of the recent past, and competing narratives regarding the event. The movement as such tries to defend itself from the criticisms, and two days after the event, in a demonstration in Rome, there were chants stating that:

'We are fifty thousand, not a few thugs'. 'Who chased Lama away from the university was the movement, not the extremists.'¹⁵⁰

Within the movement there was a debate in which the recent past is used to define the collective identity: different interpretations of what happened on February 17th are related to different ideas about the identity and the future development of the movement,¹⁵¹ to the point that opinions on the event becomes an index to measure the identity of someone as a member of the movement. This is what happened when a member of the communist youth joined the movement:

The assembly approved, with the condition that the guy takes a position on the events of Piazza Indipendenza, about Lama's speech.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Camera dei Deputati (1976) *Atti Parlamentari. VII legislatura. Discussioni*. Seduta del 10 agosto 1976, p.424 (http://legislature.camera.it/_dati/leg07/lavori/stenografici/sed0010/sed0010.pdf).

¹⁴⁸ Anonymous (1977) Università: autocritica comunista. *La Stampa*, 23 feb. p.4.

¹⁴⁹ Pucci, E. (1977) Lama: occorre lavoro invece di assistenza. *La Stampa*, 14 Apr. p.2.

¹⁵⁰ "«Siamo cinquantamila e non quattro teppisti»". "A cacciare Lama dall'Università è stato il movimento e non gli ultra", Madeo, L. (1977) Università: a Roma 40 mila in corteo a Milano scontri tra ultras di sinistra. *La Stampa*, 20 Feb. p.2.

¹⁵¹ Madeo, L. (1977) Roma: prevalgono gli 'autonomi' ma la maggioranza non ha votato. *La Stampa*, 1 Mar. p.1;

Madeo, L. (1977) A Roma l'università è ora riaperta continuano assemblee e polemiche. *La Stampa*, 2 Mar. p.2.

¹⁵² 'L'assemblea ha dato parere affermativo, vincolando il giovane a pronunciarsi sui fatti di piazza Indipendenza, sul comizio di Lama.' Madeo, L. (1977) A Roma l'università è ora riaperta continuano assemblee e polemiche. *La Stampa*, 2 Mar. p.2.

This debate was reported by the media in a different way to those of 1968: then, the movement's activists were represented by young scholars, with a name, a surname, and a political affiliation. In 1977, the media knew little about who the leaders were, and the students presented themselves, even in public debates, only with their first names name, not their surname¹⁵³, to show, even on the level of the representation, the change that had occurred between the good scholars of '68 and the anonymous students of '77.

In particular, Autonomia Operaia carried out a specific mnemonic project, instrumental to its political project, that involved their claim of a determining role in the event (probably true), in order to establish itself, in the public field, as the hardcore part of the movement, the most anti-PCI faction.¹⁵⁴ This project was instrumental to a particular interpretation, typical of the post-workerist political thought, that analyses every episode of social contention from the point of view of the relationship between 'autonomous mass struggles' and organised forces. The project is explicitly theorised and put into practice by autonomous activists:

After the events of February, which culminated in the protest against Lama at the University of Rome, after the riots in Bologna and Rome, in March, the Autonomous Movement is at the core of the general attention. [...] In fact, the Movement is not anti-communist, but it is against the PCI. [...] And 'Class Riot' the organ of the Roman autonomous collective of Via dei Volsci, stated: 'The clash with the PCI acquires a central value for the political connotation of the movement'. [...] What happened in February in Rome might contribute to clarify this issue (on which a good part of the New Left was defeated), the relationship between mass autonomous struggles and the PCI.¹⁵⁵

Today Riccardo, of Via dei Volsci, spoke, but the Roman collective had already published a slogan: 'We have to create the figure of the soldier worker'. Riccardo repeated: 'Tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, we'll meet again in the squares'. Someone whistled: 'Exaggerated, braggart' a group

¹⁵³ Sangiorgio, G. (1977) La crisi dell' Università. *La Stampa*, 26 Feb. p.6; Devecchi, S. (1977) Dopo i noti incidenti al comizio di Lama a Roma. *La Stampa*, 8 Mar. p.2.

¹⁵⁴ S., F. (1977) Montalto era assente alla marcia ultra spentasi tra indiani, slogans e pioggia. *La Stampa*, 30 Aug. p.10; Cerati, P. & Santini, F. (1977) Corteo a Bologna. *La Stampa*, 25 Sep. p.2; Anonymous (1977) Misteriosi Volsci. *Stampa sera*, 8 Nov. p.19.

¹⁵⁵ 'Dopo i fatti di febbraio, culminati nella contestazione di Lama all'Università di Roma; dopo i moti di Bologna e Roma, in marzo, il Movimento Autonomo è al centro dell'attenzione generale. [...] In realtà il Movimento non è anticomunista ma è contro il PCI. [...] E Rivolta di classe, organo del Collettivo autonomo romano di via dei Volsci, ha precisato: 'Lo scontro col PCI acquisisce valore centrale per la connotazione politica del movimento'. [...] 'Ciò che è successo nel mese di febbraio a Roma, può contribuire a chiarire questa cruciale questione (sulla quale si è infranta buona parte della Nuova Sinistra), del rapporto tra lotte autonome di massa e PCI.' Man, I. (1977) Una ideologia delirante. *La Stampa*, 15 Apr. p.3.

of Democrazia Proletaria shouted. Undismayed, Riccardo started again: 'We destroyed, in Rome, Lama's security detail, you surely can't stop us'.¹⁵⁶

This project to conquer a certain position as the hardcore faction of the movement seems to have been quite successful. This is the answer given by casual participants in a student assembly:

'Are you an autonomous, do you belong to Autonomia Operaia?', we ask him out of the blue. He shakes his head: 'No, I'm not an autonomous, I'm desperate. But I appreciate the autonomous, even if I consider them phallocratic: they have the Molotov cocktail in their head, they have a macho, militarist idea of politics, different from what we do, we that think that the revolution can also be achieved through laughter. But it is clear: we also want to make the revolution with the P38 gun, with violence'.¹⁵⁷

The diffusion of technology influenced the debate: in order to establish its own version of the facts, the movement showed a self-produced film¹⁵⁸. Furthermore, Lotta Continua contributed to the building of a memory of the event, by screening, in its national festival, a film called: 'La cacciata di Lama dall'Università'.¹⁵⁹

A few weeks after the event, the press start to print rumours about a fascist presence in the crowd of February 17th, which was probably the result of a combination of truth, PCI disinformation, and anti-fascist psychosis¹⁶⁰:

One of the first to try this kind of mimicry, at the time working perfectly, was Biagio Cacciolla,

¹⁵⁶ 'Oggi ha parlato Riccardo, di via dei Volsci, ma il collettivo romano s'era già pronunciato con uno slogan: "Dobbiamo creare la figura dell'operaio soldato". E Riccardo ha ripetuto: "Domani, e anche dopodomani, ci rivedremo sulle piazze". Qualcuno ha fischiato: "Esagerato, sbruffone", ha gridato un gruppo di Democrazia proletaria. Imperterrito, Riccardo ha ripreso: "Abbiamo spazzato via, a Roma, il servizio d'ordine di Lama, certo voi non ci potrete fermare".'. Cerati, P. & Santini, F. (1977) Corteo a Bologna. *La Stampa*, 25 Sep. p.2; Anonymous (1977) Misteriosi Volsci. *Stampa sera*, 8 Nov. p.19.

¹⁵⁷ "'Sei un autonomo, fai parte di Autonomia Operaia?'" gli domandiamo a bruciapelo. Scuote il capo: "No, non sono un autonomo, sono un disperato. Però ho stima degli Autonomi anche se li giudico falloocratici: loro hanno la molotov in testa, hanno una concezione maschilista, militarista della politica, al contrario di noi che pensiamo si possa fare la rivoluzione anche ridendo. Però sia chiaro: pure noi vogliamo fare la rivoluzione con la P. 38, con la violenza".'. Man, I. (1977) Incontro a Roma con gli 'Indiani' metropolitani. *La Stampa*, 7 Apr. p.3.

¹⁵⁸ Rot., S. (1977) Migliaia di studenti contro Malfatti. *Stampa sera*, 22 Feb. p.5; Madeo, L. (1977) La versione 'ultras' sugli scontri all'Ateneo. *La Stampa*, 22 Feb. p.12.

¹⁵⁹ Anonymous (1977) Musica stasera, corse nei sacchi e tiro alla fune domani. *Stampa sera*, 25 Jun. p.7.

¹⁶⁰ Carbone, F. (1977) Anche fascisti tra quelli della P38. *La Stampa*, 22 May p.15; Anonymous (1977) Città aperta al neonazismo. *La Stampa*, 9 Dec. p.9; Carbone, F. (1977) Nuovo questore a Roma dopo un anno turbolento. *La Stampa*, 24 Dec. p.1.

Roman president of the MSI university students, who brags about having been among those of Autonomia Operaia that violently contested Luciano Lama's speech in the University of Rome in 1977.¹⁶¹

This narrative would completely disappear for decades, only to reappear 20 years later.¹⁶²

In time, the event is increasingly associated with terrorism¹⁶³, especially¹⁶⁴ after April 7th 1979, when many of the leaders of Autonomia Operaia were arrested and charged of being part of a unique terrorist network with the Brigate Rosse (Bocca 1980). This association increased in the '80s, when some former members of the BR started to claim that they had participated in the events of February 17th 1977.¹⁶⁵

In the late 1970s, '77 becomes, as much as '68, a reference for the media coverage of student mobilisations, and the 'Chase of Lama' was one of its main symbols¹⁶⁶. But, unlike '68, '77 was near to the end of the cycle of protest. And, as I have already shown, after the end of the cycle, the perspective effect would make '77 look as far away as '68.¹⁶⁷

In the early '80s, after the 'years of lead', the memory of 1977 was filtered through the lens of terrorism. Lama, who in '77 considered his speech as an attempt at dialogue, now exalts it as a bold act of anti-terrorism:

'We saw the P38 guns that day. [...] I still think I was right in going to the university: together with

¹⁶¹ 'Uno dei primi a tentare questo genere di operazioni di mimetismo, all'epoca pienamente riuscito, è stato Biagio Cacciolla, presidente romano degli universitari missini, il quale si vanta di essere stato in mezzo a quelli di Autonomia operaia che contestavano violentemente il comizio di Luciano Lama all'università di Roma nel '77.' Fabbri, M. (1979) I neofascisti impostano la campagna elettorale. *La Stampa*, 23 Mar. p.9.

¹⁶² Chiaberge, R. (1996) Da camerata a compagno: uniamoci nella lotta al neocapitalismo. *Il Corriere della sera*. 24 May p.31; Latella, M. (2002) Frosinone, il centrosinistra incassa il sì dell' ex 'duro' missino. *Il Corriere della sera*, 25 May p.11.

¹⁶³ Anonymous (1977) Non si può essere neutrali. *La Stampa*, 6 Mar. p.21; R., S. (1977) Da contestazione a guerriglia un anno di Università a Roma. *La Stampa*, 22 Apr. p.2; Tr., G. (1977) Perché contro la DC. *La Stampa*, 3 Nov. p.1.

¹⁶⁴ Giurato, L. (1979) Lama e Spriano ad Amendola 'Compagno, a sbagliare sei tu'. *La Stampa*, 11 Nov. p.2; Anonymous (1979) Tre storie, tre giovani uccisi perché tacevano. *La Stampa*, 29 Dec. p.5; Fabbri, M (1980) Gli operai dell'Alfa 'Le Br sono fra noi'. *La Stampa*, 29 Feb. p.7; Anonymous (1992) Quell'assalto a Lama aprì gli anni di piombo. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.3; Castellano, C. (1997) Ma dire indulto non significa oblio. *La Repubblica*, 26 Aug. p.13.

¹⁶⁵ Anonymous (1982) Varisco sfuggì a molti agguati prima che le Br lo uccidessero. *La Stampa*, 9 Apr. p.2; Anonymous (1983) Savasta carceriere di Dozier. *La Stampa*, 27 Jul. p.3; Meletti, J. (2007) L'errore di noi brigatisti snobbare il Movimento. *La Repubblica*, 15 Feb. p.9 (Bologna).

¹⁶⁶ Venturi, A. (1978) I precari non sono riusciti a coinvolgere gli studenti. *La Stampa*, 12 Dec. p.2; T., M. (1979) Roma: poco interesse? *La Stampa*, 11 Feb. p.13.

¹⁶⁷ Granata, C. (1979) Il dramma di chi vuole studiare. *La Stampa*, 4 Oct. p.3; Santini, F. (1980) Studenti e lavoratori nella sua Università. *La Stampa*, 14 Feb. p.1; Riva, M. (1992) Torna il fantasma dell'autunno caldo. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.1.

me, and through what happened to me, a part of the country realised what was going on, the danger democracy was in'.¹⁶⁸

From this moment on, in every interview Lama would portray himself as a lonely anti-terrorism hero¹⁶⁹, and, after his death, he would be remembered in this way¹⁷⁰. Furthermore, the episode would be mentioned on various occasions in interviews with trade union leaders after terrorist acts.¹⁷¹

The filter of the 'years of lead' changed the memory of the 'Chase of Lama': before, parts of the movement claimed to have participated at the event on the anti-Lama front in order to build an image of uncompromising militancy; now, social and political actors claim not to have participated in the event in order to build an image of anti-terrorism commitment. What in 1977 was considered an act of youthful turbulence due to the 'arrogance' of the Communists, from the mid-1980s on becomes the incubator of murderous terrorism. Saying that someone participated in the 'Chase of Lama', in the 1980s, becomes an insult that can be used as a powerful weapon in the public debate.

A particularly clear example comes from 1985, in the midst of the stormy debate on the abolition of the sliding wage scale proposed by the government, that was led by the secretary of the Socialist Party, Bettino Craxi. The proposal deeply divided the Socialists in government from the Communists in the opposition. It also divided the CGIL – which had both Communist and Socialist members, and the leader of the Socialist current of the union, Ottaviano Del Turco, then needed to qualify his Communist counterparts as extremists: he pointed out that the abolition of the sliding wage scale was also opposed by Mario Capanna (secretary general of the radical leftist party *Democrazia Proletaria*), the 'leader of those who threw rocks at Lama at the University of Rome'¹⁷². Interestingly enough, not only does this allegation have nothing

¹⁶⁸ "“Le P38 le abbiamo viste quel giorno. [...] Continuo a credere d'aver fatto bene ad andare all'Università: insieme con me e attraverso quanto m'è capitato, una parte del Paese s'è resa conto della situazione che stava montando, del pericolo in atto per la democrazia”". Tornabuoni, L. (1984) Lama: Per fortuna ho sbagliato. *La Stampa*, 6 Jan. p.3.

¹⁶⁹ Mieli, P. (1987) Lama: neanche Berlinguer mi capì. *La Stampa*, 11 Jan. p.6; S., V. (1992) L'ex leader: 'Spontanea? No, protesta orchestrata'. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.3.

¹⁷⁰ Scalfari, E. (1996) Quando mi disse 'austerità'. *La Repubblica*, 1 Jun. p.1; P., A. (1996) L'ultimo incontro 'fidatevi di Cofferati'. *La Repubblica*, 1 Jun. p.7; Caporale, A. (1996) Lama, l'ultima volta a San Giovanni. *La Repubblica*, 4 Jun. p.6; Mafai, M. (2006) Lama, il cuore del riformismo. *La Repubblica*, 31 May p.50.

¹⁷¹ Giannini, M. (1999) Hanno voluto colpire la sinistra di governo. *La Repubblica*, 21 May p.8; Messina, S. (2002) La lezione di Andreotti I sindacati nostri alleati. *La Repubblica*, 27 Mar. p.8.

¹⁷² 'capo dei lanciatori di sassi contro Lama all'Università di Roma'. Devecchi, S. (1985) Del Turco: 'Bastano i fatti a parlare in favore del no'. *La Stampa*, 6 Jun. p.13.

to do with the Communist members of the CGIL, but it is even based on a misunderstanding: in fact, Mario Capanna, before becoming the secretary of *Democrazia Proletaria*, had been one of the most known and influential leaders of the 1968 protests in Milan, and in 1977 was far too old to have been at the university. The story ended up in a lawsuit for defamation brought by Capanna against Del Turco¹⁷³, but what is relevant for the purposes of this chapter is that in this example we find a double rhetorical jump: not only are all those who participated in the 1977 protests associated with political violence, but also those who were involved in 1968. The ‘Chase of Lama’ becomes at the same time the metonymy of the whole cycle of protest of the 1960s and 1970s and the metaphor of political violence and murderous terrorism.

The instrumental use of the ‘Chase of Lama’ is also possible the other way around, as an example of 1995 shows: in fact, when Alberto Asor Rosa – a famous literary critic and leftist intellectual with strong credentials in the mainstream left of the 1990s – was accused by a disgraced former secret service agent of having been involved with the Red Brigades, the professor’s answer began with a reference to the fact that, on February 17th 1977, he was physically on Lama’s side:

Lama? On that day I was in the university, next to the secretary of CGIL. And I risked having my bones broken¹⁷⁴

The fact that he was actually standing by Lama’s side, in 1977, could have been considered by the press as an index of participation by the professor in the Communist Party’s lack of understanding of ‘the moods of the youth’. But now, after the ‘years of lead’, it is a strong anti-terrorism credential.

The break of the ‘reflux’, in this case, is less violent than in the case of Valle Giulia, because, as I have shown, the memory of the ‘Chase of Lama’ is linked more to party politics and terrorism (topics that were covered in the ‘80s) than to the student movement, which had left the centre stage.

References to the event are made in the event of major student mobilisations, but mainly to assert the difference between the present movements and ‘77. During the ‘Pantera’ of 1990, there are some references to the presence in the occupied university of the ladder used in the

¹⁷³ Anonymous (1985) I sassi contro Lama. *La Stampa*, 8 Jun. p.2; Anonymous (1987) Querela di Capanna processo a Torino. *La Stampa*, 22 Jan. p.11.

¹⁷⁴ Stella, G.A. (1995) ‘Ma e’ attendibile un colpevole di ladrocinio?’ *Il Corriere della sera*, 9 Mar. p.14.

‘Chase of Lama’¹⁷⁵, and a statement on the difference between this movement and '77 given by the same Lama, who is now a living anti-terrorism guarantee.¹⁷⁶ During the ‘Wave’ of 2008, the only references to the event are used to establish a difference between '77 (and the ‘68-*struggle*) and the present movement, which is rather associated with the *68-counterculture*:

Do you remember 1968, 1977? A whole other story. Arriving in an occupied university is comforting or disappointing for those who have in their mind and eyes the Sapienza University, the vast assemblies of 1968, or the theatre of war of the chase of Lama. There is a great silence. You can hear the echoes of the radio play-by-play commentary of a football game, far away ambulances, even a classic choir. [...] ‘We'll not be fooled with provocations, you'll never see us doing this’. And he makes the P38 gun sign with his fingers. Who knows whether they will be fooled? Forty years ago it started with breakfast for poor children, peaceful sit-ins, a climate like the one in ‘The Strawberry Statement’, ingenuous and confident. Until the first police charge.¹⁷⁷

Many references say how different the present youth is from its predecessor¹⁷⁸ who lived in a distant and dark age, dominated by ideology and violence¹⁷⁹. Sometimes, this narrative has another implication: that the '70s involved ‘other times, other men’¹⁸⁰. There is a quite common comparison between the history of a noble and tragic age and the common, calm and often farcical present. The '70s are represented as a mythic age, for better or for worse.¹⁸¹

In the 1990s and 2000s the ‘Chase of Lama’ became a common allusion for almost every episode of public protest against trade union leaders.¹⁸² It is interesting to note how the

¹⁷⁵ Villoresi, L. (1990) ‘Baroni fate fagotto: c'è un nuovo '68’. *La Repubblica*, 17 Jan. p.9; Anonymous (1990) Università che sia un nuovo '68? *La Stampa*, 18 Jan p.1; I., R. (1990) La mappa della contestazione. *La Stampa*, 20 Jan. p.7s; G., M. (1990) Caro Cossiga ci devi ascoltare *La Repubblica*, 20 Jan. p.9.

¹⁷⁶ Anonymous (1990) Atenei, la protesta si estende ai docenti. *La Stampa*, 24 Jan. p.2.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Avete presente il '68, il '77? Altra storia. L' arrivo alla facoltà occupata è confortante o deludente per chi ha in mente e negli occhi la Sapienza delle assemblee oceaniche sessantottine o il teatro di guerra della cacciata di Lama. C' è un gran silenzio. Si sentono echi di radiocronache di pallone, autoambulanze lontane, perfino un coro classico. [...] “A noi non ci fregano con le provocazioni, non ci vedrai mai fare questo”. E mostra il gesto della P38. Chissà se non li fregano. Quarant' anni fa era cominciato con le colazioni ai bambini poveri, i sit-in pacifici, il clima da “Fragole e sangue”, ingenuo e fiducioso. Fino alla prima carica della polizia.’ Maltese, C. (2008) ‘Io non ho paura’ ecco i ragazzi dell' Onda. *La Repubblica*, 24 Oct. p.1-6.

¹⁷⁸ Bei, F. & Liguori, A.M. (2008) Tra musica, sberleffi e assemblee si prepara l' assedio al Pontefice. *La Repubblica*, 15 Jan. p.2

¹⁷⁹ Buccini, G.(1996) ‘La mia povera preghiera per l' amico Lama’. *Il Corriere della sera*, 4 Jun. p.5; Anonymous (2005) Gli anni Settanta. *Il Corriere della sera*, 7 May p.54.

¹⁸⁰ ‘altri tempi, altri uomini’. Prosperi, A.(2008) Una Porta Pia al contrario. *La Repubblica*, 16 Jan. p.1.

¹⁸¹ Sassi, E. (2007) ‘Guerrafondaio’: Bertinotti contestato alla Sapienza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 27 mar. p.8-9; Conti, P. (2008) Asor Rosa: ‘Benedetto XVI ci ripensi La sua rinuncia sarebbe un gran bel gesto’. *Il Corriere della sera*, 14 Jan. p.21.

¹⁸² Fazzo, L. (1991) Gli autonomi all'assalto. *La Repubblica*, 3 May p.19; Riva, M. (1992) Torna il fantasma

description of the event changes depending on the present episode of contention to which it refers. The most common term is 'chase', but when a story of a contemporary 'aggression' is told, then it becomes an 'aggression'¹⁸³, when people throw 'bolts' at union leaders, then the story of '77 involves 'bolts'¹⁸⁴, when people whistle at union leaders then, in the story, Lama was 'whistled at'¹⁸⁵.

Furthermore, the event is used as a reference in many episodes of conflict between a movement, or a movement group, and a public figure: the protest by the Disobbedienti (heirs of the old Autonomia) against the secretary general of the Democratici di Sinistra (heir of the old PCI) Piero Fassino during the anti-war demonstration of March 20th 2004¹⁸⁶; the protest of the student movement against the secretary general of the post-fascist party Alleanza Nazionale Gianfranco Fini in 2004¹⁸⁷; the whistles made at the representative of the government during the annual commemoration of August 2nd¹⁸⁸ in Bologna¹⁸⁹; the protests against the minister Cesare Damiano in 2006¹⁹⁰ and the president of the Camera dei deputati Fausto Bertinotti in 2007¹⁹¹; the critiques of the invitation to the pope to give a speech at the University of Rome in 2008¹⁹². The reference is always made by the journalists. But, in the rare cases in which they

dell'autunno caldo. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.1; Sivo, V. (1992) Una vita 'senza nemici a sinistra' tra piazze, fabbriche e autunni caldi. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.2; Anonymous (1992) Quell'assalto a Lama aprì gli anni di piombo. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.3; S., V. (1992) L'ex leader: 'Spontanea? No, protesta orchestrata'. *La Repubblica*, 23 Sep. p.3; D. G., C. (1992) 'Non siamo leghisti rossi'. *La Repubblica*, 24 Sep. p.2.

¹⁸³ Fazzo, L. (1991) Gli autonomi all'assalto. *La Repubblica*, 3 May p.19.

¹⁸⁴ Fuccillo, M. (1996) 'All'università gli tirai i bulloni e oggi sono qui'. *La Repubblica*, 4 Jun. p.6.

¹⁸⁵ Vassalli, S. (1997) Tra cretini rossi e neri vinsero i furbi. *Il Corriere della sera*, 9 Feb. p.23; Bertoldi, S. (1997) 1977 Quando l'Italia si ammalò di odio. *Il Corriere della sera*, 24 Sep. p. 31; Mieli, P. (2003) Pezzotta, il whisky agli indiani e il sale democratico. *Il Corriere della sera*, 29 Apr. p.39.

¹⁸⁶ Folli, S. (2004) L'intolleranza e l'indifferenza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 21 Mar. p.1; Galluzzo, M. (2004) Il corteo e gli scontri. Le reazioni. *Il Corriere della sera*, 22 Mar. p.9; Franco, M. (2004) 'Alleati, basta calcoli di bottega. C'è chi da mesi avvelena il clima'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 22 Mar. p.5; Gorodisky, D. (2004) Pezzotta: ecco cosa succede ad accarezzare certi movimenti. *Il Corriere della sera*, 22 Mar. p.9; Fusani, C. (2004) Il day after dei collettivi Siamo stati provocati. *La Repubblica*, 22 Mar. p.8; Cazzullo, A. (2004) Cossiga: 'E' giusto trattare con l'Eta. Fassino? Un errore andare al corteo'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 23 Mar. p.14; Latella, M. (2004) Allora gli anni '70 non hanno insegnato nulla? *Il Corriere della sera*, 23 Mar. p.55.

¹⁸⁷ Casalini, S. (2004) 'Fini ha il diritto di parlare'. *La Repubblica*, 4 Nov. p.5; Augias, C. (2004); Fini all'università, una lezione d'intolleranza. *La Repubblica*, 7 Nov. p.18; Latella, M. (2004) I ragazzi del Duemila come quelli degli anni 70. *Il Corriere della sera*, 4 Nov. p.56.

¹⁸⁸ On August 2nd, 1980 a terrorist bombing in the central station of Bologna killed 85 people and wounded more than 200. The attack has been materially attributed to the neo-fascist terrorist organization Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari.

¹⁸⁹ Fregonara, G. (2005) La sinistra che non ama i fischi: atto di debolezza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 3 Aug. p.9.

¹⁹⁰ Marro, E. (2006) Damiano: contro di me slogan da anni '70. *Il Corriere della sera*, 5 Nov. p.10.

¹⁹¹ Sassi, E. (2007) 'Guerrafondaio': Bertinotti contestato alla Sapienza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 27 mar. p.8-9.

¹⁹² Conti, P. (2008) Asor Rosa: 'Benedetto XVI ci ripensi La sua rinuncia sarebbe un gran bel gesto'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 14 Jan. p.21; Sofri, A. (2008) In nome di Galileo fatelo parlare. *La Repubblica*, 15 Jan. p.1; Bei, F. & Liguori, A.M. (2008) Tra musica, sberleffi e assemblee si prepara l'assedio al Pontefice. *La Repubblica*, 15 Jan.

are given a voice, contemporary militants always reject this comparison.¹⁹³

The 'Chase of Lama' is also cited on the occasion of anniversaries¹⁹⁴ as a symbol of '77: a dark and gloomy age, dominated by the Autonomia, the final climax of the degeneration of the good '68-counterculture into the bad '68-struggle.¹⁹⁵ Only recently have some different representations started to emerge, remembering the creative nature of that movement¹⁹⁶ and the role of the PCI as something other than institutional and repressive¹⁹⁷ in the 1970s.

In any case, the lack of known leaders and the bad image of the movement produce an almost total absence of veterans in the media. Some politicians, like Walter Veltroni and Gianni Alemanno, have been asked to give their recollections of the 'Chase of Lama',¹⁹⁸ but only as witnesses belonging to that generation, not as the protagonists of those events.

It is interesting to note the already mentioned campaign promoted by *Il Corriere della sera* during the Prodi cabinet (2006-2008), which often remembers the 'Chase of Lama' and stresses every possible conflict that could create a contradiction between the centre-left government and the social movements.¹⁹⁹ This goal seems to be shared by the part of the movement that claims the heritage of the Autonomia, which organises a public assembly in the University of Rome to commemorate the 'Chase of Lama' and compares it with the present.²⁰⁰

7. Concluding remarks

7.1 Possessive memory and contentious politics

p.2; Ceccarelli, F. (2008) Divisi nel nome di Benedetto. *La Repubblica*, 16 Jan. p.1; Prosperi, A. (2008) Una Porta Pia al contrario. *La Repubblica*, 16 Jan. p.1; D.M., G. (2008) Andreotti: 'Solo pochi ragazzi adesso restiamo tutti buoni'. *La Repubblica*, 16 Jan. p.6; Liguori, A.M. (2008) 'Macché violenza, slogan No Vat'. *La Repubblica*, 17 Jan. p.2(Roma); Coppola, P. & Dusi, E. (2008) Pronti a contestare Mussi e Veltroni. *La Repubblica*, 17 Jan. p.15; Valentini, G. (2008) Il cortocircuito della Sapienza. *La Repubblica*, 19 Jan. p.26.

¹⁹³ Liguori, A.M. (2008) 'Macché violenza, slogan No Vat'. *La Repubblica*, 17 Jan. p.2(Roma); Coppola, P. & Dusi, E. (2008) Pronti a contestare Mussi e Veltroni. *La Repubblica*, 17 Jan. p.15.

¹⁹⁴ Villoresi, L. (1997) E venne l' anno della P38. *La Repubblica*, 10 Feb. p.14.

¹⁹⁵ Bertoldi, S. (1997) 1977 Quando l'Italia si ammalò di odio. *Il Corriere della sera*, 24 Sep. p. 31.

¹⁹⁶ Serra, M. (2007) Entro il precipizio di Bologna la grassa. *La Repubblica*, 19 Jan. p.52.

¹⁹⁷ Mafai, M. (2005) Cara Bravo c' eravamo anche noi. *La Repubblica*, 3 Feb. p.38; Vitali, W. (2007) In quei giorni non ci fu un solo Pci. *La Repubblica*, 10 Mar. p.1 (Bologna).

¹⁹⁸ Caccia, F. (2006) 'Come eravamo: la nostra Roma anni '70'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 30 Apr. p.3.

¹⁹⁹ Battista, P. (2007) Vicenza e Violenza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 8 Feb. p.1; Sassi, E. (2007) 'Guerrafondaio': Bertinotti contestato alla Sapienza. *Il Corriere della sera*, 27 mar. p.8-9.

²⁰⁰ Roncone, F. (2007) 'Tutti alla Sapienza' Trent' anni dopo la cacciata di Lama. *Il Corriere della sera*, 14 Feb. p.13; Brogi, P. (2007) Sapienza, il preside vieta l' assemblea sul '77. *Il Corriere della sera*, 17 Feb. p.8.

The concept of possessive memory (Braunstein 1997) has usually been associated with the generation of the militants. The veterans, after the mobilisation, have tried to claim the exclusive right to tell this story.

But this analysis has shown that the veterans are not the only actor interested in claiming ownership of a collective memory. For example, if we look at the memory of terrorism and political violence, we see that, after a phase in which the veterans ‘possessed’ that memory, now, a new social group – the community of the relatives of the victims – claims that memory as its own, and views the ‘possession’ of that memory by the veterans as a profound injustice. In the same way, if we look at the memories of the ‘battle of Valle Giulia’ and of the ‘Chase of Lama’ we see an ongoing conflict about their ownership: both journalists and veterans, especially in the case of Valle Giulia, show a possessive attitude similar to the one described by Braunstein.

In fact, the possession of a particular past, in particular circumstances, can be a precious resource. This is the case, for example, after an important episode of contention: as I have shown, the capacity of a social actor to take charge of building a narrative of that episode, can define the future of the position of that group in the movement and of that episode in the field of public memory. In the same way, the possession of a certain narrative of the past (for example the narrative proposed by Lama about his speech being a deliberate act of anti-terrorism) can grant legitimacy and change the position of an actor in the public field, triggering the movement of other actors towards that position (for example, Asor Rosa who tries to fit into Lama's narrative in order to defend himself from the accusations of collusion with the terrorists).

The metaphor of possession, in itself, is problematic: these processes do not seem to follow the rule of economics, given that different actors can possess the same past in same moment, if they are able to develop different narratives on its past and they address different audiences (for example, Lama and Autonomia Operaia on the events of '77). After all, it seems rather interesting to analyse these processes as contentious politics, as competitions among different actors in a shared social and symbolic environment.

7.2 The decreasing malleability of mnemonic material

The articles examined seem to refer to specific canons of narrative representation, which are

gradually established over the years. The recurrence of these themes is more frequent in the articles published in the 1990s and 2000s. This would confirm my hypothesis about the decreasing malleability of mnemonic material once a representation has achieved a significant role in the field of public memory.

In fact, some scholars have already pointed out the path-dependency of memory work and the limited malleability of the historical material (Spillman 1998). But I am saying something else: this limited malleability depends not only on the original characteristics of the mnemonic material, but also on the position that a representation has in the field of public memory. Marginal representations can be challenged and defeated even decades after they have been established, whereas it is more and more difficult to do so once they have established a strong position in the field. A good example is Pasolini's poem on Valle Giulia in the canon of social contention. In the 1990s and 2000s it became increasingly difficult to oppose it; to the point that, when an actor wants to propose a narrative that is incompatible with the canon, the easiest thing to do is to accept the canon as a premise and adapt the narrative to it, as happened in the case of the militants of the social centre at Leoncavallo in 1992. In that context, opposing the narrative of Pasolini's poem was more difficult, risky and expensive, from a strategic point of view, than accepting it as an incontestable premise and stating that the class relationships between the police and the movement has changed since then.²⁰¹

7.3 The two '68s: '68-counterculture versus the '68-struggle

The narrative recurrences I have identified seem to refer to two broad representations of the 'long '68': on the one hand, the representation of an age of general change of fashions, an explosion of creativity able to cross ideological borders, and a great generational process of modernisation; on the other hand, the representation of political and social mobilisations, characterised by an exasperated obsession with ideology, by a predominance of sectarian groups, by a general climate of violence.

In the articles I have found two different '68s (the '*68-counterculture*' and the '*68-struggle*'), whose representation refers to different semantic fields: they tend to produce in the reader different feelings, involve different actors (veterans are needed for '*68-struggle*', while the

²⁰¹ Arachi, A. (1992), 'I bulloni sono partiti da qui'. *Il Corriere della sera*, 17 Oct. p.40.

journalist often considers himself a trustworthy witness of the '*68-counterculture*'), and attribute different roles to the movement and to the organisations.

Furthermore, there is an established temporal relationship between them: the '*68-counterculture*' is usually associated with 1968, while the '*68-struggle*' involves the 1970s. Various moments are identified, in the public memory, as the turning point between the former and the latter: the 'battle of Valle Giulia', the bombing of Piazza Fontana, even the 'Chase of Lama'. In fact, in the media the habit of reading the past *a posteriori* prevails, and, therefore, the turning point is set when it is needed to fit in the narrative format of that particular story. The most interesting point, for the purposes of this research, is the fact that elements that, in the historiography, are represented as deeply intertwined, become, in public memory, two separate narratives of the past, told in different ways and by different actors.

7.4 Valle Giulia as the canon of social conflict (the role of cultural artefacts)

The episode of Valle Giulia seems to have become a constant reference for any kind of social contention involving the police. Articles on hooligans often refer to that episode, and in particular to the poem that Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote about it, which seems to have become the universal interpretative canon for social contention and for the relationship between citizens and police, ready to be used by journalists on any occasion.

This phenomenon confirms the powerful role of cultural production in mnemonic processes: some peculiar cultural artefacts are able to accumulate, preserve and transmit memory. In this way, even if their narrative is immediately disqualified in the public sphere (as happened with Pasolini's poem), they have the capacity to survive in time. Then, decades later, when the social actors which competed with them in the public sphere (in this example, the student movement) has disappeared, they are still there, and their mnemonic capacity is still intact and able to produce effects in the public field without any competition.

‘Valle Giulia’ in <i>La</i>					
	e	ec	g	tv	c
1990	3	2	0	0	1
1991	0	0	0	0	0
1992	2	1	1	0	0
1993	1	0	1	0	0
1994	1	0	1	0	0
1995	1	0	1	0	0
1996	1	0	0	0	1
1997	9	3	4	1	1
1998	8	2	5	0	1
1999	1	0	0	0	1
2000	8	1	5	0	2
2001	6	4	2	0	0
2002	5	2	3	0	0
2003	8	3	1	0	4
2004	6	0	4	0	2
2005	5	0	4	0	1
2006	8	0	2	2	4
2007	10	2	0	0	8
2008	26	6	4	0	16

Table 4.3 Occurrences by year of the term ‘Valle Giulia’ in *La Repubblica* between 1990 and 2008.

Legend:

- e** = occurrences actually referring to the event
- ec** = occurrences actually referring to the event on the occasion of a contemporary episode of contention
- g** = occurrences actually referring to the event on an occasion arbitrarily chosen by the newspaper
- tv** = occurrence actually referring to the event on the occasion of a TV broadcast
- c** = occurrence actually referring to the event on the occasion of the publishing of a book, a film, an article in another newspaper, or on the occasion of a public show

7.5 Repositories of memory

In the analysis of the two different narratives (the ‘68-*counterculture* and ‘68-*struggle*), I have found evidence of two different phenomena that have already been partially addressed in the

study of the public memory of contention: in the case of the '*68-counterculture*' there are all the characteristics of the so called 'ellipsis of agency' (Polletta 2006), that is, the tendency to represent the movement as something that exploded in an organic and unexpected way, without the active effort of any organised actor. In the case of the '*68-struggle*', instead, we find a frequent over-representation of the role of organisations (Meyer 2006), which sometimes fill the entire space of representation. The role of organised components inside the movement, therefore, is at the same time underestimated and exaggerated, depending on the semantic field. In fact, as I have already shown, the veterans have a bigger role in the representation of the conflictual aspects of '68 than they have in the representation of the counterculture-related aspects. Furthermore, the phenomenon of possessive memory, and the prevalence of the veterans in the field of memoirs, creates a bigger role for them and for the group to which they belonged in those narratives.

These considerations suggest an issue that will be explored in Chapter 7: the presence of different repositories of memory in which different representations of the past are stored. The '*68-struggle*' is told mainly by the militants of the political groups, while the '*68-counterculture*' is told primarily by the journalists themselves and by 'generational witnesses', consulted for their celebrity status. In my opinion, these actors draw on different repertoires: a social memory, produced and reproduced in the media, and a group memory, marginal in the field on public discourse, that is guarded by organisations and their veterans in an autonomous space in the public sphere.

The movement itself has no means of cultural production able to survive the movement, and for this reason its mnemonic function is externalised to the media and the social memory they produce (this does not mean that the movement has no role in the production of this memory, especially in the early stages). Organisations, instead, build and guard their own memory. In this way, two different symbolic and narrative repositories are used to form the public memory.

Chapter 5 - Conflictual memories of the Spanish student movement: representations of the Spanish '68 in the public memory of the transition

1. The Spanish '68 between student mobilisation and anti-Francoism

If in the Italian case it was difficult to identify the student movement as a protest actor in the general cycle of protest defined as the 'long '68', in the Spanish case things get much worse. In fact – and not only from the point of view of public memory, but also as far the academic literature is concerned – the master frame of historical periodisation is not based on social mobilisation but on the political system: everything that happened before 1975 is Francoism, or anti-Francoism, while everything that happened after 1975 goes under the label of 'transition'.

The most relevant contributions to the history of the Spanish student movement follow this periodisation, and focus primarily on the Francoist era (Maravall 1978, Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer and Baldó Lacomba 2007; Jáuregui and Vega 2007), apart from an isolated exception (Montserrat Navarrete 1995). Furthermore, a significant part of the scholarship focuses on local cases (Sanz Díaz 2002; Álvarez Cobelas 2004; Carrillo-Linares 2008), a point of view which, while important for accounting for the known regional complexity of the Spanish political and cultural field, is insufficient for the goal of drawing the big picture of the Spanish '68.

The literature agrees in identifying the years between 1966 and 1969 as the most relevant wave of student mobilisation in Spanish universities, reaching 1971 or 1972 in some cases (Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer and Baldó Lacomba 2007; Jáuregui and Vega 2007). Radicalisation, fragmentation, and repression characterise the Spanish movement after that period, in a way that is not very different from the Italian experience, and the same might be said about the shift of focus from the universities and education to labour and society in general. Nevertheless, in the Italian case it is possible to argue for the existence of a long cycle of protest, from 1968 to 1978, and to find at the end of this period a strongly reminisced event, e.g. the 'Chase of Lama', still taking place in the university. In the Spanish case, however, there

is no theorisation of such a long wave of mobilisation, and therefore it seems wiser, for the moment, to focus on the late 1960s, leaving the relationship between this wave of student mobilisation and those that followed for a further stage of research.

2. The debate on memory and the Spanish transition

A few years ago Felipe González said: ‘When Franco died, there was a reasonable fear towards the historical confrontation that we had lived during the 19th and 20th centuries, and this suggested an effort of caution, of closeness to the other. This attitude was the best one to achieve, for the first time in the history of Spain, a democratic and peaceful coexistence. One of its foundations is, without any doubt, the fear of overflowing certain limits [...] a fear that was almost genetically embedded in us’.[...]

The institutionalisation of consensus is, perhaps, the most conspicuous outcome of the transition. It was about establishing a new way of solving problems, and inaugurating a phase regulated by unprecedented principles. It was necessary to break with an ancestral tradition of civil confrontation that was usually credited to the existence of an almost racial predisposition of the Spaniards towards violence. [...] The ghost of the predisposition to Cainism had been growing over time, and Franco had been exploiting the trauma of the Civil War. To enlarge it for his own advantage. (Aguilar Fernández 2008: 319-320, my translation)

It is impossible to work on public memory in the Spanish context without taking into account the legacy of civil war, Francoism, and the transition to democracy. Scholars like Paloma Aguilar have shown how the memory of the civil war hegemonised the Spanish public discourse on the past, with the idea, exploited and promoted by Francoism, that civil war was a natural consequence of the republic, a naturally unstable and conflictual regime, unable to keep together the inherently divided and violent Spaniards. This led to the unspoken agreement, during the transition to democracy, not to use the past as a weapon, and to choose oblivion in order to secure peace (Aguilar Fernández 2006: 270-318). Even if the scholarship has recognised the role of social and political contention in leading up to the crisis of the dictatorship and in pushing the elite towards democratization as an inevitable outcome (Maravall and Santamaria 1988, Martín García 2010), the *ruptura pactada* remains the main frame of representation of the transition in the public debate. This rhetoric of consensus, moderation and agreement is based on the actual ‘reality of the Spanish transition to post-

Francoist democracy. But it distorts it. Negotiation and pactism were not a free option, but an imposition of the circumstances [...]. Actors and collectives that were protagonists of the regime change, anonymous and known, organised and not, continuously found themselves bound to act with moderation to avoid the recurring problem of the power void' (Durán Muñoz 2000: 174), to act inside the established 'tolerance margin' (Durán Muñoz 2000: 180). The relationship between the political transition and a precise choice of politics of memory is clear: "The old regime became rapidly invisible and the democratic deficit of the new political edifice was disguised. [...] the Transition depended on the erasure of memory and the reinvention of a new political tradition' (Cardús i Ros 2000:19)

3. Sources: the Spanish press and the transition to democracy

My analysis starts from the examination of media content concerning protest events during the Spanish '68, in order to identify the most powerful narratives of which contemporary public memory on these events consists. I have focused primarily on three of the main Spanish newspaper: *El País* (progressive, based in Madrid), *ABC* (conservative-monarchist, also based in Madrid) and *La Vanguardia* (conservative-centrist, based in Barcelona), in order to account for political and regional differences, in the mainstream media sphere. Whilst *El País* was founded in 1976, after Franco's death, the analysis of the other two newspapers cannot avoid some consideration of censorship.

The period I am analysing comes right after one of the main examples of the so-called *aperturismo*: the *Ley Fraga*, the reform of press censorship promoted by the minister of information Manuel Fraga Iribarne.

The partial opening to the freedom of information produced a continuous struggle between the press, which tried to push the permitted limits of information further and further, and the government, which sought to 'control the opening process' (Barrera 2002: 413). The student mobilisation was one of the main issues of contention between the press and the government, with the former cautiously but increasingly covering student strikes and demonstrations and the latter sometimes intervening to punish newspapers and editors or to suspend the freedom of the press due to the state of exception (Barrera 2002). The political orientation towards the monarchy and conservatism of *ABC* is well known, while *La Vanguardia*, in the later years of Francoism, followed a moderately *aperturista* line, both under editors Xavier de Echarri (1963-

1969) and Horacio Sáen Guerrero. ‘La Vanguardia exploited the half-open door to pave the way for the transition and the peaceful coexistence of all political opinions’ (Nogué Regàs & Barrera 2002: 434, my translation).

In the qualitative analysis of the articles from the digital archives of the three different newspapers, I will take into account censorship and, more generally, governmental intervention, as a relevant factor supported by the literature (Barrera 2002; Jáuregui and Vega 2007; Aguilar Fernández 2008).

4. La *capuchinada*: 1968 before 1968

In March 1966, some 500 students and a large number of intellectuals and academics held a secret meeting in a convent in Sarrià (Barcelona). The convent was surrounded by police, all the participants were arrested, and sixty members of the staff of the University of Barcelona were dismissed for two years. As a consequence a large number of demonstrations were held in Barcelona and in other university districts, in solidarity with the students arrested in Sarrià, and declarations of support were made by intellectuals and academics. A National Day Against Repression was organized in the University of Madrid, also in March, in which well-known intellectuals participated. Demonstrations were then held from March to May. (Maravall 1978: 112)

The so-called *capuchinada* of March 9th 1966 (also known by the Catalan version *caputxinada*), the secret night-time assembly in a Capuchin convent near Barcelona in which the *Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Barcelona* (SDEUB, ‘Democratic Union of the Students of the University of Barcelona’) was founded, as a clandestine and democratic counterpart to the official Francoist *Sindicato Español Universitario* (SEU, ‘Spanish University Union’) and its recent evolution, the *Asociaciones Profesionales de Estudiantes* (APE, ‘Professional Associations of Students’), is generally considered as the starting point of the most intense wave of student mobilisation in Spanish contemporary history, which went on until 1969.

The role of the *Capuchinada* in the history of the Spanish student movement might be considered similar to that of the *Battle of Valle Giulia* in the Italian case: also in this case, the mobilisation had started a few months earlier, and the *Capuchinada* became the symbolic moment that defined the rising wave of mobilisation, and shaped its representation in the public

sphere (although the concept of a 'public sphere' in the Francoist setting, which was characterised by media censorship, is particularly controversial), both in terms of relevance and in terms of the mobilisation frame (in this case both student issues and democratisation). Yet, there are also some significant differences that need to be taken into account in the analysis: first of all, the *Capuchinada* occurred before the international protests of '68, without that 'global youth revolution' frame. It also took place in Barcelona, thus, not in the national capital, and this would strongly place future commemorations of the event in the Catalan political setting; furthermore, the *Capuchinada* was a peaceful event of civil disobedience, while in Valle Giulia the active violent resistance to the police ('We didn't run away any more'), was one of the most relevant aspects. Finally, the political context is quite different and this, as I will show later, has a relevant effect on the memory of these events. In fact, even if it might be argued that the revolutionary spirit and the need of a more open and free society was shared by the rebellious youth all over the world in '68, the context grants much more legitimacy to the Spanish case than to the Italian one. It is almost banal to say that fighting for freedom and democracy under Franco is considered, *ex post*, more legitimate and less controversial than doing so under the Italian Christian Democracy. This historical factor has ambivalent consequences in terms of mnemonic representation: on the one hand, the lack of democracy in Spain grants legitimacy to the aspirations of the Spanish revolutionary youth; on the other hand, democratisation becomes the main mnemonic filter through which the event is represented, hiding other contents and frames.

The first representation of the *Capuchinada* in the Spanish press was strongly influenced by the censorship: in fact, the event took place on March 9th, 1966 – the *Ley Fraga* was issued only on March 18th and the new wave of student mobilisation had been going on for few months.

Therefore, both *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* were extremely cautious about writing about the night-time assembly, albeit with some interesting differences. Both the newspapers started on March 10th by publishing a note of the rector's office that threatened sanctions for students participating in unauthorised assemblies in university buildings²⁰². The note was obviously written before the assembly, and the prohibition of using university rooms was the reason for

²⁰² Anonymous 1966. Severa advertencia del rectorado de la Universidad de Barcelona. *ABC*, 10 Mar. p.42.; Anonymous 1966. La convocatoria de reuniones y asambleas estudiantiles. Nota de la Oficina de Prensa del rectorado. *La Vanguardia*. 10 Mar. p.24.

which the assembly was held in the convent. The following day, March 11th, there were no official notes, and therefore *ABC* did not publish anything about the topic, while *La Vanguardia* reported:

On Sunday evening, in the monastery of the Capuchin Friars in Sarria a meeting of university students took place, without obtaining the approval of the academic and governmental authority. People external to the university life participated in this meeting, and even some foreigners. When the meeting was concluded, in front of public order forces, some participants fled the building and after the police verified their identities they were allowed to go back to their residences. The others refused to leave the premises of the monastery until the police demanded, at the exit, to see their identification documents.

During yesterday, a partial lack of participation in different university courses of our city was noted. In front of some universities and at the crossroads between Avenida del Generalísimo and the Paseo de Gracia there were student demonstrations and attempts to stop traffic. The public order forces dispersed the demonstrations.

The note of the office of the rector of the University that we published in our edition of yesterday refers to the meeting that was previously mentioned.²⁰³

It is a brief and impersonal article, but it reports most of the facts regarding the assembly, including the solidarity showed by students through their strikes and demonstrations. The key to understanding why these few lines were written and published is probably found in the words ‘nuestra ciudad’ (‘our city’): *La Vanguardia* is the most important newspaper in Barcelona and, unlike *ABC*, it could not ignore an event of such relevance occurring in the city.

And neither did the government. On March 12th a new comment was published in both newspapers, with different titles that reveal their different attitudes: *ABC* is openly militant (on

²⁰³ ‘El miércoles por la tarde se efectuó en el convento de los PP. Capuchinos de Sarria una reunión de estudiantes universitarios que no había obtenido la aprobación de la autoridad académica y gubernativa. A esta reunión asistieron personas ajenas a la vida universitaria y también algunos extranjeros. Concluida la reunión y ante la presencia de las fuerzas de orden público, algunos asistentes abandonaron el edificio y después de ser comprobada su personalidad por la policía pudieron volver a sus domicilios. Los restantes se han negado a abandonar el recinto del cenobio mientras fuese exigida por la policía a la salida la exhibición de sus documentos de identificación. Durante el día de ayer se produjo una parcial falta de asistencia en diversos cursos de distintas, facultades y escuelas especiales de nuestra ciudad. Frente a estos centros docentes y en el cruce de la avenida del Generalísimo con el Paseo de Gracia se produjeron manifestaciones estudiantiles e intentos de interrumpir el tráfico rodado. Las fuerzas de orden público disolvieron estas manifestaciones. A la reunión anteriormente citada responde la nota del rectorado de la Universidad que publicamos en nuestra edición de ayer.’- Anonymous 1966. De la reunión de estudiantes en el convento de los PP. Capuchinos de Sarria. *La Vanguardia*, 11 Mar. p.19.

the side of the government) defining the event a ‘subversive meeting’²⁰⁴, while *La Vanguardia* tries to take a more neutral stance, calling it simply a ‘student meeting’²⁰⁵ and leaving any political characterisation to the note signed by the provincial government.

	ABC	El País	La Vanguardia		ABC	El País	La Vanguardia
1966	0	\	0	1988	1	0	3
1967	0	\	0	1989	0	0	1
1968	0	\	0	1990	0	0	5
1969	0	\	0	1991	0	0	3
1970	0	\	0	1992	1	0	4
1971	0	\	0	1993	0	3	2
1972	1	\	0	1994	0	0	3
1973	0	\	0	1995	0	0	2
1974	0	\	0	1996	0	0	14
1975	0	\	0	1997	1	2	2
1976	0	0	1	1998	0	1	3
1977	0	0	3	1999	0	9	5
1978	0	0	3	2000	0	6	2
1979	0	0	0	2001	0	3	2
1980	0	1	6	2002	0	1	5
1981	0	0	4	2003	1	0	7
1982	0	1	4	2004	1	0	4
1983	1	2	1	2005	0	1	4
1984	0	0	1	2006	0	4	4
1985	0	3	2	2007	0	0	4
1986	0	4	13	2008	0	2	1
1987	0	3	5	2009	0	0	3

Table 5.1 Articles containing the word *capuchinada* or *caputxinada* in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* between 1966 and 2009.

²⁰⁴ Anonymous 1966. Reunión subversiva en un local religioso de Barcelona. *ABC*, 12 Mar. p.77.

²⁰⁵ Anonymous 1966. De la reunión estudiantil en el convento de los PP. Capuchinos. Nota del Gobierno Civil. *La Vanguardia*, 12 Mar. p.26.

The terms *capuchinada* and *caputxinada* were never used in *La Vanguardia* or *ABC* during the Francoist era, except for a curious case in 1972, when the Catalan writer Sebastià Juan Arbó used the word ‘capuchinada’ in an article²⁰⁶, and a few weeks later wrote another piece justifying it as a spelling mistake. In this second article, the author mentions ‘clandestine meetings’ and jokes about the Capuchins connected with the episode²⁰⁷, showing that the term *capuchinada*, even if it was not used in the press, was already known and unequivocally referred to the event of 1966.

The first explicit reference to the event using this label was on March 9th 1976 in *La Vanguardia*. The tenth anniversary of the *capuchinada* came at a very particular period: Franco has died only a few months earlier, the prime minister was (still) Carlos Arias Navarro, appointed by the dictator, censorship has not yet been abolished and the anti-Francoist parties were still illegal. Nevertheless, *La Vanguardia* published a celebratory article that, from the title on, aimed at linking the *capuchinada* with the current transition to democracy: ‘Today the tenth anniversary of the Democratic Union of Students is commemorated. The university movement considers its goals of democratic and representative organisation’²⁰⁸.

The first few lines are dedicated to the event that is supposed to be reported in the article: a commemoration at the university:

A commemorative event of the tenth anniversary of the constitution of the Democratic Union of Students of the University of Barcelona (SDEUB) will be celebrated at eleven o’clock this morning, Tuesday, in the department of economic, at the campus of Pedralbes. The organisers (the committee for cultural activities of the department) and the participants in the roundtable (Francisco Fernández Buey, Javier Paniagua, Manuel Sacristán, Xavier Folch, Rafael Senra, Albert Puigdomenech, Antonio Borrás) state that the event is inscribed in the process of analysis and critical evaluation of the student and university movement in terms of its goals and its organisation. The historical experience of the SDEUB is, in this sense, a valid point of reference.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ Arbó, Sebastià Juan 1972. El santo errar. *ABC*, 30 May p.13. In the original text, the author's name is spelled ‘Sebastián’, in the Castilian way.

²⁰⁷ Arbó, Sebastià Juan 1972. El error lamentable. *ABC*, 19 Jul p.13. In the original text, the author's name is spelled ‘Sebastián’, in the Castilian way.

²⁰⁸ ‘Hoy se conmemora el décimo aniversario del Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes. El movimiento universitario se plantea actualmente sus objetivos de organización democrática y representativa.’ Domingo, Oriol 1976. Hoy se conmemora el décimo aniversario del Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes. El movimiento universitario se plantea actualmente sus objetivos de organización democrática y representativa. *La Vanguardia*, 9 Mar. p.29.

²⁰⁹ ‘Un acto conmemorativo del décimo aniversario de la constitución del Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Barcelona (SDEUB) se celebrará a las Once de la mañana de hoy martes

Then, the article summarises the documents approved in the night-time assembly of 1966, now distributed to the press in the press conference, and, in the end, calls for a reflection in the ‘university movement’ in the light of the experience of SDEUB. It looks like an attempt to develop, ten years later, the kind of mnemonic project that is typical of the early stage of public remembrance. In fact, at least as far as the mainstream media are concerned, the *capuchinada* in 1976 is still a new, recent event: the content of the documents approved in the assembly were published for the first time, and the event had never before been publicly represented in the media. If breaks and continuities between past and present are constructed in the present, then, in this case, it looks like the mnemonic entrepreneurs (a group of veterans of the SDEUB) were more interested in establishing continuities than breaks. In fact, from the point of view that concerns them, that is, the challenge towards Francoism represented by the independent and democratic social and political organisations, very few things had changed since 1966. The mnemonic project that was being developed uses the commemoration of the *capuchinada* as a chance to reflect on the current state of democracy inside and outside the Spanish universities. It was a chance to publicly repeat the message of the ‘manifesto for a democratic university’²¹⁰ approved in 1966:

The manifesto proposed a change in the conception of higher education, to make it so that it stopped being a privilege of the economically higher classes; a change of the content and of the organisation of university teaching; the respect of the cultural and linguistic pluralism of the country, so that these cultures should count on universities as centres of consolidation and development of its peculiarity; recognition that all the cultural, social, ideal and political implications of knowledge are as important in the university as the programmes of the exams. Regarding university freedom, the manifesto proposed these claims: the democratic and representative character of the academic bodies and freedom of teaching, research, expression, and association. The manifesto concluded by signalling that the principles contained in it constituted nothing more than the initial inspiration of a democratic reform of the university. And it states that the university must take in its hand the cause of the freedom of culture and put it on the broad horizon of the struggle for

en la facultad de Económicas, en el campus de Pedralbes. Los organizadores (la comisión de actividades culturales de la facultad) y los participantes en la mesa redonda (Francisco Fernández Buey, Javier Paniagua, Manuel Sacristán, Xavier Folch, Rafael Senra, Albert Puigdomenech, Antonio Borrás) pretenden que el acto se inscriba en el proceso de análisis y valoración crítica del movimiento estudiantil y universitario en lo que respecta a sus objetivos y a su organización. La experiencia histórica del SDEUB es, en este sentido, un válido punto de referencia.’

²¹⁰ ‘manifesto per una Universitat democràtica’.

The message is a clear call for a democratic transition, which in March 1976 is far from being granted. The commemoration of the *capuchinada* is a good pretext to have this message reported in the media, and the SDEUB is a good proxy to do so, given that most of the veterans participating in the commemoration (Fernandez Buey, Paniagua, Sacristán, Folch) are known members of the PSUC, the Catalan communist party, which was still illegal in 1976.

In this first article two of the main traits of the *capuchinada* emerge, derived directly from the documents approved in 1966 and from the link, proposed by specific political actors, between that event and the present transition to democracy: the ‘student union’ aspect, regarding education reform and student representation, and the ‘democratisation’ aspect, challenging the lack of democracy in the Francoist student unions in order to challenge the entire Francoist system.

Similar considerations might be made for the second article citing the *capuchinada*, published in *La Vanguardia* on February 2nd 1977. The article reports on ‘Universitat contra feixisme’, an anti-fascist rally held inside the university of Barcelona a few days after the massacre of Atocha, an attack against an office of labour lawyers connected with the then illegal PCE (Spanish Communist Party) and *Comisiones Obreras* (‘Workers’ Commissions’, communist trade union), committed by far-right terrorists which resulted in five deaths. The article reports, among other things, the speeches of Agustí de Semir, an activist of the anti-Francoist platform *Assemblea de Catalunya*, who cited the *capuchinada* as an example of ‘la función desempeñada por el movimiento estudiantil en el proceso de conquista de las libertades democráticas’, and Ramon Torrent, professor of law, remembering ‘las decisivas fechas del Sindicat Democràtic d’Estudiants’ and the fact that ‘los objetivos sectoriales del Movimiento

²¹¹ ‘El manifiesto proponía un cambio en la concepción de la enseñanza superior, para que dejara de ser un privilegio reservado a las clases económicamente altas; un cambio de contenido y de la organización de la enseñanza universitaria; el respeto a la pluralidad cultural y lingüística del país ya que estas culturas deberían contar con las Universidades como centros de consolidación y despliegue de su peculiaridad; reconocimiento de que todas las implicaciones culturales, sociales, ideales y políticas del saber y de la educación son tan universitarias como los temarios de examen. En relación con la libertad universitaria, el manifiesto planteaba estas reivindicaciones: carácter democrático y representativo de los órganos académicos y libertades de enseñanza, investigación, expresión y asociación. El manifiesto concluía señalando que los principios contenidos en el mismo no constituían más que la inspiración inicial de una reforma democrática de la Universidad. Y afirmaba que la Universidad debe tomar en sus manos la causa de la libertad de la cultura e insertarla en el amplio horizonte de la lucha por la libertad en la sociedad española.’

universitario se han insertado siempre, y continúan estándolo en la lucha global por la democracia’.

Once more, the *capuchinada* is used as an example of the commitment of the university to the general struggle for democracy, and actors are constructing continuities between 1966 and 1977, represented as part of the same wave of anti-Francoist mobilisation. In respect to the previous article, the ‘democratisation’ trait here is predominating, while the ‘student union’ aspects are almost invisible. Also in this case it should be pointed out that neither the dictator nor the government or any party are cited – the socialist, communist and nationalist parties were still illegal and censorship still formally in force. It is also interesting to notice the appearance of Catalan nationalism in this article: the title of the rally is in Catalan, the name of *Assemblea de Catalunya* is written in Catalan, as is *caputxinada* and the *Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants*, the traditional Catalan anthem *Els Segadors* is sung, and on the speakers' table there is a Catalan flag. The *capuchinada* is now used in the context of the *Assemblea*, involving both leftist and nationalist parties and linking the struggle for democracy with the goal of recognition of the Catalan identity.²¹²

A few months later, the representation of the *capuchinada* evolves in a rather different direction. In fact, between 1977 and 1978 it is cited in four articles in *La Vanguardia*, all of which were written by the same journalist, Lluís Permanyer. The articles have a rather similar structure: they start with a recent event (the candidacy in the first free elections of Catalan socialist leader Joan Reventós, who participated in the *capuchinada*²¹³; the inauguration of the new academic year²¹⁴; the end of the need for passports to travel to most European countries²¹⁵; the celebration of the poet Pere Quart in the university²¹⁶) and they compare the present situation with the dictatorial past, in an implicit fashion, without ever citing Franco or using the word ‘dictatorship’, but praising the freedom and democracy that Spanish citizens are now experiencing. The attitude towards the event is quite different from before: while in the previous articles the *capuchinada* was portrayed as something recent and unknown, in these it is defined as ‘célebre’²¹⁷ (‘famous’) and the journalist takes for granted the fact that the readers

²¹² Anonymous 1977. Las ‘Universitat contra feixisme’. *La Vanguardia*, 4 Feb. p.19.

²¹³ Permanyer, L. 1977. El socialismo sin adjetivos. Joan Reventós o la honradez. *La Vanguardia*, 25 Jun. p.8.

²¹⁴ Permanyer, L. 1977. Nuevo curso universitario. *La Vanguardia*, 29 Oct. p.62.

²¹⁵ Permanyer, L. 1978. Aquel pasaporte. *La Vanguardia*, 7 Feb. p.70.

²¹⁶ Permanyer, L. 1978. Pere Quart en la Universidad. *La Vanguardia*, 23 Feb. p.70.

²¹⁷ Permanyer, L. 1977. El socialismo sin adjetivos. Joan Reventós o la honradez. *La Vanguardia*, 25 Jun.

are well aware of the event, without any need for further explanation. The *capuchinada* in these articles is part of the past, a past that is still near enough to be frightening and thus requiring caution, but, nevertheless, as shown by the use of expressions such as ‘aquellos años’²¹⁸ (‘those years’), ‘durante unas décadas que se nos antojaban interminables’²¹⁹ (‘during decades that looked endless to us’), ‘al igual que en tiempos’²²⁰ (‘like then’) decisively in the past.

This greater distance between past and present might be partially explained by the political context: in the few months between February and June 1977 anti-Francoist parties and unions were legalised and the first free elections were held. Therefore, the dictatorship looked a little further away than it did before. Furthermore, in the previous articles the actors of commemoration were veterans still committed to political activism, while here it is the journalists referring to the past: while according to leftist democratic veteran activists, members of illegal parties, democracy was something to struggle for, for a journalist in a moderate centrist newspaper like *La Vanguardia*, after free elections, democracy is something to enjoy everyday and to celebrate, in the constant comparison with the past. The general tone of the articles seems to be aimed at showing how good democracy is:

[T]he fact that we are now allowed to cross the Pyrenees without needing to show our passports, I think, will make us feel a little more equal to the much envied citizens of democratic Europe.²²¹

[A] finally free and democratic university.²²²

Another aspect these articles underline is the generational one: the *capuchinada* is represented as a part of the anti-Francoist *cursus honorum*, an experience shared by a generation, indeed, by the generation who are now taking up roles in the media industry, in academia, and in the parliament.

p.8.

²¹⁸ Permanyer, L. 1977. Nuevo curso universitario. *La Vanguardia*, 29 Oct. p.62.

²¹⁹ Permanyer, L. 1978. Aquel pasaporte. *La Vanguardia*, 7 Feb. p.70.

²²⁰ Permanyer, L. 1978. Pere Quart en la Universidad. *La Vanguardia*, 23 Feb. p.70.

²²¹ ‘el hecho de poder cruzar de ahora en adelante los Pirineos sin necesidad de exhibir el pasaporte, creo que nos hará sentir un poco más Iguales a los tan envidiados ciudadanos de la Europa democrática.’ Permanyer, L. 1978. Aquel pasaporte. *La Vanguardia*, 7 Feb. p.70.

²²² ‘una Universidad por fin libre y democrática’, Permanyer, L. 1978. Pere Quart en la Universidad. *La Vanguardia*, 23 Feb. p.70.

From 1978 to the end of the 1980s, the *capuchinada* was cited in *La Vanguardia* and in *El País* mostly on the occasion of anniversaries or in the reconstruction of the biography of politicians and intellectuals. A whole new generation of Catalan leftist politicians²²³, artists²²⁴ and professors²²⁵ were unveiling their clandestine pasts, and the *capuchinada* is part of their anti-Francoist curriculum vitae. This generational trait is particularly relevant in *La Vanguardia*, because a relevant part of the Catalan establishment comes from the experience of the student pro-democracy mobilisation, including the rector of the Pompeu Fabra university²²⁶, but it is also present in *El País* and even in *ABC*, which, after the mistake of 1972 cites the *capuchinada* only 6 times in 37 years, and 4 of these in the biographies of artists or politicians²²⁷.

The 15th anniversary of the event, in 1981, is particularly interesting. Three different articles were written about a commemoration organised by veterans in June of that year. The delay might be linked to the fact that the actual anniversary, on March 9th, came two weeks after the attempted military coup lead by lieutenant colonel Antonio Tejero, on February 23rd, 1981 (the so-called 23-F). The coup is never cited in the articles, but the influence is undeniable: the article announcing the commemoration states that the organisers share ‘the desire that those circumstances, luckily overcome, will not come back again’²²⁸, and the third one, reporting the event, is called ‘The *caputxinada*, a spring in 1966 that must not be necessary again’²²⁹ and cites a speech in which a veteran states that:

²²³ Garcia i Clavel, I. 1980. El perque del meu suport a l'Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya. *La Vanguardia*, 7 Mar. p.29; Anonymous 1980. Partidos en liza: Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (7). Benet, impulsor incansable y combatiente intelectual. *La Vanguardia*, 13 Mar. p.11; Anonymous 1983. Alexandre Cirici, senador socialista. *El País*, 11 Jan.; Anonymous 1986. La media naranja de los eurodiputados catalanes. *La Vanguardia*. 11/ May p.13.

²²⁴ Anonymous 1980. Hoy se inaugura la mas completa antología de la obra de Tàpies. *El País*, 28 May; Anonymous 1985. Fallece en Barcelona el arquitecto y diseñador catalán Antoni de Moragas. *El País*, 26 Mar.

²²⁵ Anonymous 1982. Falleció Jordi Rubió i Balaguer. *La Vanguardia*, 26 Jul. p.4; Jardi, E. 1983. Tarín y su crónica de cincuenta años. *La Vanguardia*, 24 Feb. p.9; Solé Tura, J. 1985. Punto de referencia singular. *El País*, 29 Aug.

²²⁶ Anonymous 1990. Entrevista a Enric Argullol rector de la Universitat Pompeu Fabra. “Deseamos crear buenos profesionales”. *La Vanguardia*, 30 Oct. p.3.

²²⁷ Anonymous 1983. Ha muerto el crítico de arte y senador socialista Cirici Pellicer. *ABC*, 11 Jan.; Anonymous 1992. Raimon Obiols: El eterno aspirante a la Generalidad. *ABC*, 15 Mar. p.78.; Pulido, N. 2003. ‘Hoy nos acordamos de una guerra, pero hay matanzas terribles en otras partes del mundo’. *ABC*, 27 Mar. p.63; Anonymous 2004. Xirinacs no se presentará al juicio por exaltación del terrorismo. *ABC*, 9 Mar. p.25.

²²⁸ ‘el deseo de que aquellas circunstancias, afortunadamente superadas, no vuelvan a repeterse’. Anonymous 1981. Quince años de ‘La Caputxinada’. *La Vanguardia*, 6 Jun. p.7.

²²⁹ ‘La ‘caputxinada’, una primavera en 1966 que no debe volver a ser necesaria.’

The experience of the capuchins, in the words of Ramón Torment, should make us see clearly that if the political forces must constitute the base of the agreements, a cohesive social fabric around a progressive option should reinforce this action, all this should be the great lesson that we have to take for our time.²³⁰

In these articles, the *capuchinada* is defined as one of the most important episodes of the ‘lucha antifranquista’²³¹ (‘anti-Francoist struggle’). It is the first time that the dictator is cited, in an article on this event in *La Vanguardia*: the taboo of the transition, with the complete removal of the dictatorship, starts to be challenged. In the next few years, *El País* used the word ‘resistencia’ (‘resistance’) twice when referring to the *capuchinada*.²³²

The gradual conclusion of the Spanish transition had two milestones in the changes of government: from the centrist UCD to PSOE (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, the socialist party) in 1982 (the first progressive government since the 2nd Republic) and from the socialists to PP (*Partido Popular*, the conservative party) in 1996 (the first time that the right, the heir of Francoism, came to government in a democratic way). Democratic alternation in the government is seen as a sign of normalisation of the Spanish political system, disproving the traditional idea of the ‘two Spains’ unable to coexist peacefully, which Franco used to justify the dictatorship.

This periodisation is partially reflected in the evolution of the memory of the *capuchinada*, or it least it is one of the factors determining the itinerary of the commemoration, with the gradual historicisation of Francoism, the decline of Spanish exceptionalism and insertion of the *capuchinada* into the framework of the global '68. Both in 1966 and 1976, for the 20th and the 30th anniversaries, *La Vanguardia* celebrated the *capuchinada* in its weekly magazine. Nevertheless, the topic did not disappear from the newspaper: on the contrary, the daily edition published reactions and debates directly or indirectly provoked by the magazine.

This is the case, for example, in 1966, when two different letters, written by readers and

²³⁰ ‘La experiencia de los capuchinos, en palabras de Ramón Torment, debería hacer ver con claridad que si las fuerzas políticas deben constituir la base de los acuerdos, un tejido social cohesionado en una opción progresista debería reforzar esa acción, todo ello apuntado como la gran lección que debe extraerse en la actualidad’. Anonymous 1981. La ‘caputxinada’, una primavera en 1966 que no debe volver a ser necesaria. *La Vanguardia*, 17 Jun. p.9.

²³¹ Anonymous 1981. Quince años de ‘La Caputxinada’. *La Vanguardia*, 6 Jun. p.7.

²³² De S., J. 1983. Salvat presenta un montaje sobre la historia de Cataluña en clave feminista. *El País*, 20 Feb.; Bohigas, O. 1985. Más allá de la anécdota. *El País*, 26 Mar.

published in the newspaper, complained about certain names being missing from the list of *capuchinada* participants, which had been published in the magazine²³³. Quite a difference, in respect to ten years earlier, when the veterans' commemoration was semi-clandestine, and it can be argued that the media had a certain role in this process: the frequent association of relevant politicians and intellectuals with that episode of mobilisation had granted the *capuchinada* such a level of legitimation that people asked to be added to the list of participants, people wanted to participate in the commemoration, to share a role in what is described as a decisive historical event. And a few days later, on April 6th, the lawyer who challenged in court the repression of the assembly gave his story, concluding that:

Those were years in which we acted to advance the country in other ways, including lawsuits when the act were illegal, because we were confident, in spite of a few exceptions, in the independence of judges; those were years in which we acted with generosity (as lawyers that participated in that appeal, we did not gain anything, and we did not think about economic compensations), because the country needed the contribution of many to change, a country that today, seen from then by those who experienced the Caputxinada, made a 180-degree turn in which many cooperated and that is almost impossible to comprehend for the new generations. These twenty years have been intense but have passed quickly like seagulls, leaving in their trail work and worries in the lives of many.²³⁴

The dictatorship is finally considered history, and so far in the past that new generations could not understand what happened. But in these sentences there is something more: there is an explicit episode of possessive memory regarding the *capuchinada*, the first claim of recognition, by someone who participated, of the right to be commemorated.

²³³ Anonymous 1986. No figuraban en la lista de la 'caputxinada'. *La Vanguardia*, 20 Mar. p.5; Anonymous 1986. Las universitarias de la 'Caputxinada'. *La Vanguardia*, 23 Mar. p.6.

²³⁴ 'Eran años en los que se actuaba para hacer avanzar el país por otras vías, incluso a través del pleito cuando las actuaciones eran ilegales, porque se confiaba, a pesar de excepciones, en la independencia de los jueces; eran años en los que se actuaba generosamente (los juristas que intervenimos en el recurso citado nada percibimos ni pensábamos en compensaciones económicas) porque el país exigía la aportación de muchos para cambiarlo. un país que hoy, visto desde entonces por quienes vivimos la Caputxinada, ha dado un vuelco en el que tantos colaboraron y que es casi imposible de comprender por las nuevas generaciones. Estos veinte años han pasado densos pero raudos como las gaviotas, dejando en su estela quehaceres e inquietudes en la vida de muchos.' Pou-Viver, T. 1986. La Caputxinada y el Tribunal Supremo. *La Vanguardia*, 6 Apr. p.6.

In fact, veterans go on organising commemorations²³⁵, and one of events for the 20th anniversary is celebrated inside the University of Barcelona, where the assembly was prohibited 20 years before²³⁶.

The 20th anniversary is also celebrated with a long article in *El País*, which 10 years before did not even exist,²³⁷ and is the first detailed account of the event in the newspaper. I will report almost all of it because it marks a turning point: for the first time, the story of the *Capuchinada* is told by a Madrid-based newspaper, thus addressing a national audience, and by a newspaper that was born after Franco's death, more committed to the present context of the Spanish 1980s than to the past:

On Wednesday 9th March 1966, at four in the afternoon, students of the university district of Barcelona started arriving at the monastery of the capuchins situated in the neighbourhood of Sarrià in Barcelona. Together with them, 33 guests (professors, artists, architects, lawyers...) entered the premises. It was the beginning of what went down in history as the Capuchinada. The goal was to approve the statute of the Democratic Union of Students of the University of Barcelona (SDEUB). The police surrounded the monastery and ordered the participants to come out. They did not, and a 72-hour-long siege started, which ended with the storming of the police at the premises.²³⁸

The début of the detailed story of the *capuchinada* in a newspaper published in Madrid had some innovations: first of all, the story has to be told from the beginning, addressing an audience that is not constituted by Catalan veterans or bystanders, but by readers all over the country. Furthermore, this is the first time that we find the story of the *capuchinada* told not by police reports or by veterans, but instead by a journalist, whose main interest is not to disqualify or to commemorate, but to make the story interesting to a national and young audience, who did not live through the events. Thus, the narrative aspects need to be underlined more than the political ones, and the story of the *capuchinada* becomes that of a siege or a stand-off, similar to those in Hollywood

²³⁵ Anonymous 1986. Caputxinada veinte años después. *La Vanguardia*, 10 Apr. p.69.

²³⁶ Anonymous 1986. Conmemoración de la Caputxinada. *La Vanguardia*, 24 Apr. p.66; Anonymous 1986. A los veinte años de la 'Caputxinada'. *La Vanguardia*, 24 Apr. p.24.

²³⁷ Arroyo, Francesc 1986. La 'Capuchinada', 20 años después. 500 universitarios aprobaron en 1966 los estatutos de una organización democrática. *El País*, 9 Mar.

²³⁸ El miércoles 9 de marzo de 1966, a las cuatro de la tarde, empezaron a llegar estudiantes del distrito universitario de Barcelona al convento de capuchinos situado en el barrio barcelonés de Sarrià. Junto a ellos, penetraron en el recinto 33 invitados (profesores, artistas, arquitectos, abogados ...). Era el inicio de lo que ha pasado a la historia como la Capuchinada. El objetivo era aprobar los estatutos del Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Barcelona (SDEUB). La policía puso sitio al convento y conminó a salir a los asistentes. No lo hicieron y se inició un largo cerco de casi 72 horas, que finalizó con la irrupción en el recinto por parte de la policía.

action movies.

This narrative dimension allows something to emerge that had not appeared before in the story of the *capuchinada*:

The scandal provoked by the Capuchinada was enormous. The right roared against the decision of the capuchines to allow the ‘realisation of a criminal act’, to use the words of a memo of the attorney general's office; the left welcomed the meeting as a step forwards in the struggle for freedom. The police enacted a total deployment. All the participants were placed under investigation and the outcomes were put together in a big file in which there was no lack of references to all the homilies pronounced in the churches of Barcelona on the Sunday that immediately followed the events. The newspaper *Arriba* published an editorial denouncing the meeting, which was reported in the other newspaper of the *Movimiento*²³⁹, as well as in the *Televisión Española* and in the *Radio Nacional*. In this editorial one of the most constant lines of attack of the Francoist regime was evident: the capuchins had facilitated, with their permissiveness, either as accomplices or through their ignorance, the cohabitation of boys and girls in a space, even more scandalous, dedicated to seclusion. In Barcelona, a pamphlet was circulated: ‘Caputxin's Night Club. The ‘coolest’ place in Barcelona. Open all night. Big racist parties. The great separatist progressive show that presents the Golden Rib orchestra and the community of barefoot bearded men. [...]’ Similarly, we can note the question about where the boys and girls had slept that the police asked of the 33 guests and the students that were interrogated. And also one note in a confidential report, in which it can be read: ‘Details: it is said that, due to the lack of bed sheets, one of the students²⁴⁰ slept wrapped in an altar cloth.’²⁴¹

In this article, for the first time, there are frequent references to the more counterculture-

²³⁹ *Movimiento Nacional* (‘National Movement’) was the set of Francoist organisations during the dictatorship, including the *Falange* party, the *Sindicato Vertical* trade union, etc.

²⁴⁰ The original Spanish version clearly refers to a woman.

²⁴¹ ‘El escándalo provocado por la Capuchinada fue mayúsculo. La derecha bramó por la decisión de los capuchinos de dar asilo para la “comisión de un acto delictivo”, por decirlo con palabras de un informe del ministerio fiscal; la izquierda saludó la reunión como un paso más en la lucha por las libertades. La policía realizó un despliegue total. Todos los asistentes fueron investigados y los resultados acumulados en un macroexpediente en el que, por no faltar, ni siquiera faltan las referencias a todas las homilias pronunciadas en las iglesias barcelonesas durante el domingo inmediatamente posterior a los actos. El diario *Arriba* publicó un editorial condenando la reunión que fue reproducido en otros diarios del *Movimiento*, así como por *Televisión Española* y *Radio Nacional*. En ese editorial se marcaba una de las líneas de ataque más constantes del régimen franquista: los capuchinos habían facilitado, con su permisividad, o cómplice o ignorante, la cohabitación de muchachos y muchachas en un espacio, para mayor escándalo, de clausura. En Barcelona, un panfleto abundaba en el tema: “Caputxin's Night Club”. El local más ‘fresco’ de Barcelona. Abierto toda la noche. Grandes juergas racistas. El gran show progresista separatista que presenta la orquesta Penca d'Or y la comunidad de los barbudos descalzos. [...] En el mismo sentido puede anotarse la pregunta sobre dónde durmieron chicos y chicas hecha por la policía a los 33 invitados y a los estudiantes a los que se tomó declaración. Y también una nota en un informe confidencial en el que puede leerse: “Detalles: se dice que a falta de sábanas una de las estudiantes durmió envuelta en un mantel del altar.”’

related aspects of the event: the ‘scandal’ of the ‘cohabitation of boys and girls’, the anecdote about the mysterious girl who slept under an altar cloth, the jokes about the Capuchins, etc.

This repertoire was new for the *capuchinada*, but quite common for what I have called the ‘68-counterculture’ in a previous chapter: the more the *capuchinada* becomes part of the past, losing its salience in the contemporary political context with the gradual conclusion of the transition to democracy, the more it assumes the traits usually connected with the symbolic framework of the global ‘68, in particular the ones referring to youth and sexual liberation. It is a decisive step towards the *sixty-eightisation* of the memory of the Spanish 1960s: no more references to the *Manifiesto por una Universidad Democrática*, but, instead, titillating allusions to ‘free love’ and jokes about the ambiguity of the church. The *capuchinada*, for the first time, sounds closer to the ‘Summer of Love’ than to a political roundtable. To be clear: I am not denying either of the different components of the event, but simply noting that the prevailing element, from a narrative point of view, tends to shift in time, with a decisive role played by *El País* as an agent of the delocalisation of the story of the *capuchinada* (now told to a national audience) and of its insertion in an increasingly global (and decreasingly politicised) framework.

In 1986, this process was just starting, and the narrative of democratisation still existed: on the same day, in fact, *El País* published another article summarising the content of the documents approved at the night-time assembly of 1966 and linking it to the general struggle for democracy:

There is no doubt that the society itself in which the Spanish university was placed at the time was one in which the students participating in the meeting saw the absence of freedom: ‘All university students are put in structures that are not up to date with the current mentality and are clearly anti-democratic’, it can be read in the basic programme. In fact, in the chapter of university rights, the following can be read: ‘Claiming as fundamental: freedom of expression; freedom of association and assembly; freedom of research’.²⁴²

²⁴² ‘No cabe la menor duda de que la propia sociedad que envolvía a la universidad española de la época era el lugar donde los estudiantes reunidos veían la ausencia de libertad. “Todos los universitarios estamos insertos en unas estructuras inadecuadas a la mente actual y claramente antidemocráticas”, puede leerse en el programa sindical mínimo. De ahí que en el capítulo de derechos del universitario se observen los siguientes: “Reivindicar como fundamentales: la libertad de expresión; la libertad de asociación y reunión; la libertad de investigación”’ A., F. 1986. Sobre las causas del atraso universitario. *El País*, 9 Mar.

The alternative between the established democratisation-centred and nationalism-centred narratives of the *capuchinada* and the new '68-counterculture traits that were gradually emerging dominated the field – proposed (with few exceptions) mainly by veterans. In fact, three days after the latest article, a veteran of the *capuchinada*, Francisco Fernandez Buey, a philosophy professor and communist militant, wrote an article²⁴³ in *El País* challenging both representations and claiming that:

[T]he reconstruction of that history from the point of view of ideologies that imposed themselves in Catalan politics (in particular nationalism and various versions of post-modern social-democracy) tends to overestimate anecdotes of dubious importance and to ignore the essential.²⁴⁴

But the critique of the representation of the *capuchinada* is not only political, but also an explicit case of possessive memory. The veteran complains about the lack of media representations of the past containing the voices of those who were actually in Sarrià, of those who participated in the event and, more in general, of the history of the SDEUB:

Did anyone bother to ask the 500 and something delegates of the SDEUB that participated in the assemblies at the capuchins, how many of them had heard at least once the names of those that later went down in history as famous guests? [...]

So, beyond the anecdotes, the important thing is to ask ourselves the way we were, what the Martas and Jordis, the Neus and the Ramones of 1966 wanted, the thousands of Barcelonan students that for a year considered the SDEUB as their own thing. What is missing is a political evaluation, and even a cultural one, in a broad sense, in the answer to these questions.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Fernandez Buey, F. (1986) Tal como éramos. *El País*, 12 Mar.

²⁴⁴ '[L]a reconstrucción de aquella historia hecha desde la óptica de ideologías que se impusieron en la política catalana mucho después (en particular el nacionalismo y las varias versiones de la socialdemocracia postmoderna) tiende a sobrevalorar anécdotas de dudosa importancia y a ignorar lo esencial.'

²⁴⁵ '¿alguien se ha tomado la molestia de preguntar a los 500 y pico delegados del SDEUB que asistieron a la asamblea de capuchinos cuántos de entre ellos habían oído una sola vez el nombre de los que luego han pasado a la historia como invitados famosos? [...] Así que, más allá de las anécdotas, importa preguntarse cómo éramos, qué querían las Martas y los Jordis, las Neus y los Ramones de 1966, aquellos miles de universitarios barceloneses que durante un año consideraron al SDEUB como cosa propia. Hecho en falta una valoración política, e incluso cultural en un sentido amplio, en las respuestas actuales a ese pregunta.'

Fernandez Buey reclaims the right to memory and the right of the veterans to tell their own story, which is hidden by the version spread by other actors – political (Catalan nationalism and social democracy) media, and religious (‘Opus Dei’). In this article the ‘student union’ trait comes back to the fore:

We wanted to self-organise as university students and called this project – with a certain reluctance – a free, democratic, autonomous and representative union, in order to indicate in the best way, through repetition, our radical opposition to the University Student Union (SEU); we wanted an amnesty for the students and professors that had been surveilled, expelled and fined in different Spanish universities, we demanded freedom of expression in teaching and learning in the university. And since we started to know that these basic aspirations would not have been achieved in the framework of the then-existing political regime, we joined the most strictly university-centred demands (democratic management of the governmental bodies of the university, the reform of obsolete study plans, the abolition of lifelong tenure) with other needs that went beyond this framework: the autonomy of university in respect to political power, the rationalisation of resources with a substantial increase of the budget dedicated to higher education, the development of research in accordance with the new needs of society, etc.²⁴⁶

Furthermore, the veteran challenges the myth of the young bourgeois student interested only in individual liberation and generational change inside the elite, typical of the ‘68-*counterculture* narrative, and criticises the instrumentalisation of the *capuchinada* by Catalan nationalists and reclaims the hegemonic role of the communist party, in the plurality of the movement, remembering the movements' commitment to a ‘project of transformation’²⁴⁷, its ‘constant show of solidarity with the workers in their wage struggles’²⁴⁸, its ‘critique of the class-based barriers that existed in the university’²⁴⁹.

²⁴⁶ ‘Queríamos autoorganizarnos como estudiantes universitarios y llamábamos a este proyecto -con cierta redundancia- sindicato libre, democrático, autónomo y representativo para mejor indicar así, con la repetición, nuestra oposición radical al Sindicato de Estudiantes Universitarios (SEU); queríamos que los alumnos y profesores expedientados, expulsados y multados en varias universidades españolas, fueran amnistiados; exigíamos libertad de expresión docente y discente en la Universidad. Y como empezábamos a saber que estas aspiraciones elementales no se lograrían en el marco del régimen político entonces existente, juntábamos las, reivindicaciones más propiamente universitarias (la gestión democrática de los órganos de gobierno de la Universidad, la reforma de planes de estudio obsoletos, la desaparición de las cátedras vitalicias) con otras exigencias que rebasaban ya ese marco: la autonomía de la Universidad respecto del poder político, la racionalización de los recursos con un aumento sustancial del presupuesto dedicado a la enseñanza superior, el desarrollo de la investigación en consonancia con las nuevas necesidades sociales, etcétera.’

²⁴⁷ ‘proyecto de transformación.’

²⁴⁸ ‘constantes muestras de solidaridad con los obreros ante las reivindicaciones salariales.’

²⁴⁹ ‘crítica a las barreras clasistas existentes tanto en la Universidad.’

‘We were not nationalists’²⁵⁰ – he writes – ‘it was, like any other movement, a sort of Noah's Ark, [...] The fact that the hegemony in such a Noah's Ark was communist does not mean that most students were aware of it’.²⁵¹

The final lines of the article make explicit for the first time the contentious nature of the memory of the *capuchinada*, which is used by different actors to legitimise different pasts and presents. The attitude of Fernandez Buey is explicitly possessive: he is claiming the right to the memory of the event for the protagonists, which he qualifies from a particular generational and political point of view.

I ask myself whether it makes any sense to remember these things, other than to cultivate melancholy. Maybe it does, because once more the winners are those writing history, based on the constant and tedious need to legitimate their own past. For the rest, they tell me that one of the repressors of that time might get to become Dean by consensus 20 years later and in one of the departments in Barcelona that resisted the dictatorship the most.²⁵²

Furthermore, this is the first time in which, in an article referring to the *capuchinada*, the ‘winners’ are not identified as the anti-Francoists. This article makes explicit the critique to the transition by at least a part of the left: the representation of the *capuchinada* that he is criticising is part of the general narrative of the transition, which he sees as a way in which a part of the Spanish society, that did not oppose Franco, tries to legitimise itself in the democratic context. From Fernandez Buey's point of view, the struggle was not ‘won’ by the anti-Francoists of 1966, but by others, less active in resisting the dictatorship, and even some of the people who supported the regime are now gaining positions of power. The act of rebellion in which he participated is now used, from his point of view, to legitimise a political project, that of the ‘pacted’ transition and of the continuity with the past regime, which betrays the ideals of the past.

This attempt of re-appropriation of the memory of the *capuchinada* by the veterans is possible because of the association of the event with the anti-Francoist *cursus honorum*

²⁵⁰ ‘no éramos nacionalistas.’

²⁵¹ ‘aquello fue, como todos los movimientos de masas con autenticidad, una especie de Arca de Noé. [...] El que la hegemonía en ese Arca fuera comunista no quiere decir que la mayoría de los estudiantes estuviera al tanto de tal cosa.’

²⁵² ‘Me pregunto si recordar estas cosas tiene algún sentido que no sea el de cultivar, la melancolía. Tal vez lo tenga, porque una vez más la Historia la están haciendo los vencedores de hoy desde la tan repetida como tediosa necesidad de siempre que consiste en legitimar el propio pasado. Por lo demás, me dicen que uno de los represores de entonces puede llegar a ser decano por consenso 20 años después y en una de las facultades barcelonesas que más resistieron a la dictadura.’

in the biographies of politicians and intellectuals. But this phenomenon, from a certain point on, also works in the opposite direction: the *capuchinada* is cited also in the biography of the people involved in the repression of the mobilisation, like cardinal Marcelo González²⁵³ and former rector Francisco García-Valdecasas²⁵⁴.

In the early '90s the representations based on the narrative of the transition to democracy and on Spanish exceptionalism coexist with attempts to challenge this view and represent the *capuchinada* as a partial and contentious memory. A good example is evident when comparing the article of socialist senator Jordi Maragall published in *La Vanguardia* in 1991 and the one written by his son, then socialist mayor of Barcelona, Pasqual Maragall, in *El País* in 1993.

The former²⁵⁵ starts by discussing the lack of interest towards politics among the youth, complaining that 'the youth cannot comprehend the changes that occurred. They have never lived under a dictatorship and cannot appreciate the climate we are living in'²⁵⁶. The comparison with the ideals of his generation feels almost natural:

20 or 25 years ago, young people, instead, felt the call of democracy and of insubordination towards obsolete values. Here, in Catalonia, in Spain, they mobilised and confronted established power. [...] The participation in an event against Francoist repression cost me a night in the cells of the courthouse and a trial.²⁵⁷

But the article, while glorifying participation in the Franco era and complaining about the apathy of younger generations, is not urging students to follow the example of their parents. On the contrary, the transformed context means they should follow a different route:

Now this cannot happen anymore. [...] We should not fall into delirious utopias. An adequate dose of utopia is healthy and enriching. An overdose is nefarious. With a passion for the golden mean, we will achieve the level of aspiration that puts the right colour to

²⁵³ Rodríguez, A. 1993. El cardenal Marcelo González, primado de España, cumple hoy la edad de jubilación. *El País*, 16 Jan.

²⁵⁴ Corcuera, A. 2005. Francisco García-Valdecasas, ex rector de la Universidad de Barcelona. *El País*, 24 Jan.

²⁵⁵ Maragall, J. 1991. Contra el desaliento. *La Vanguardia*, 7 Jul. p.29.

²⁵⁶ 'Los jóvenes no pueden darse cuenta del cambio. No han vivido nunca bajo una dictadura y no pueden apreciar el clima que nosotros estamos viviendo.'

²⁵⁷ 'Hace 20 o 25 años los jóvenes sintieron en cambio esa llamada de la democracia y de la insumisión a unos valores obsoletos. Aquí, en Cataluña, en España, se movilizaban y se enfrentaban con los poderes establecidos. [...] La participación en el acto contra la represión franquista me costó una noche en los calabozos del Palacio de Justicia y un juicio.'

The tone is quite similar to that of the '70s and '80s: the unequivocal difference between Spain before and after Franco's death, the representation of the anti-Francoist struggle as an experience shared by the whole society, the fear of the civil war, and, in the end, the praise of moderation and pragmatism, against 'delirious utopias'. The memory of the *capuchinada*, in this framework, is something that unites all the Spanish people, an important and cautious step forward in the gradual and slow path towards democracy, which should remind everyone how precious democracy is and how, with moderation and pragmatism, by avoiding nefarious utopias and being passionate about the 'golden mean', we can defend it. Political action was good and admirable in Franco's time, and we should be grateful to those who committed themselves to it. But now we should appreciate democracy for what it is and avoid any unrest.

This is a rather different attitude from the one that Maragall's son Pasqual, then mayor of Barcelona and later president of Catalonia, reveals in an article published in *El País* in 1993, in which he criticises the then president of Catalonia and historical Catalan national leader Jordi Pujol, for not being interested in politics during the Francoist era, and therefore not having participated in the *capuchinada*.²⁵⁹

In this way Maragall challenges the identification between the *capuchinada* and Catalan nationalism, and, above all, uses a series of events of Catalan anti-Francoism, including the *capuchinada*, as a divisive element, that is, as something able to separate those who were truly opposing Francoism from those who were dedicated to other causes. This contentious use of memory is quite recent, coming in 1993 during a Spanish political debate still dominated by the canon of the transition. The difference between the articles written by this father and son is a good example of an existing generational divide: a new generation of progressive politicians are not afraid to break, even if in a very limited and cautious way (both Maragalls are members of the PSOE, one of the core actors of the transition), the general narrative of anti-Francoism, and to use the memory of the past of a weapon in the political struggle against an opponent.

The coexistence of different narratives in the early '90s is also clear from another

²⁵⁸ 'Ahora esto no puede suceder. [...] Tampoco debemos caer en utopías delirantes. Una dosis adecuada de utopía es saludable y enriquecedora. Una sobredosis es nefasta. Apasionados por el justo medio, alcanzaremos aquel nivel de anhelo que pone el color adecuado a nuestro quehacer cotidiano en su lucha contra el desaliento.' Maragall, J. 1991. Contra el desaliento. *La Vanguardia*, 7 Jul. p.29.

²⁵⁹ Maragall, P. 1993. La derecha. *El País*, 26 Jul.

comparison, in respect to the insertion of the *capuchinada* in the framework of the global '68. In 1992, in an article in *La Vanguardia* mocking the revolutionary past of a centrist politician, the *capuchinada* is cited in a peculiar context:

It was the time of 'be realistic, demand the impossible'. In those times, the clandestine political 'centre' could be, for example, a Trotskyist party like the Communist Revolutionary League in which [the politician] participated.²⁶⁰

This quote is interesting because it associates the *capuchinada* with a quote by Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, one of the main symbols of the global framework of the 1960s. This would never have happened just a few years earlier, when the master frame of the transition still absolutely dominated the Spanish public sphere. These references, in 1992 are certainly visible and increasing, but remain limited. In fact, a few months later, in the same newspaper, another article²⁶¹ argues for a strong difference between the Spanish '66 and the global '68. The author states that 'the generation of 1966'²⁶², the one of the *capuchinada*, is the 'local version of the Euro-American one of 1968, the one of the French May and of the Californian university campus'²⁶³, but then goes on to stress the exceptionality of the Spanish experience, the undeniable difference between the student opposition to Francoism and the global 1968:

In the special context of Francoist Spain, the 1960s progressives, more than to destroy the culture of our parents, wanted to recuperate the one of our grandparents. [...] We wore suits and ties and elegant shoes, and did not demand the abolition of hierarchies, but the restitution of the republican Universitat Autònoma and such things. [...] More than to imagine a different future, we dreamt of recuperating a decent past. [...] We were of an age with the 'soixante-huitards' and shared their combative spirit. But we lived in a different Europe (if it was such).²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ 'Era la época del "seamos realistas, pidamos lo imposible". En aquellos tiempos, el "centro" político clandestino podía ser, por ejemplo, un partido trotskista como la Lliga Comunista Revolucionaria en la que militó'. Anonymous 1992. Un trotskista de centro. *La Vanguardia*. 18 Mar. p.9.

²⁶¹ Folch, R. 1992. La generación del 66. *El País*, 30 Sep, p.23.

²⁶² 'la generación del 66.'

²⁶³ 'la versión local de la euroamericana del 68, aquella del mayo francés y de los campus universitarios californianos.'

²⁶⁴ 'en el especial contexto de la España franquista, los progres de los años sesenta, más que querer destruir la cultura de nuestros padres, deseábamos recuperar la de nuestros abuelos. [...] llevábamos americana y corbata o zapatos de medio tacón, y no pedíamos la abolición de las jerarquías, sino el restablecimiento de la Universitat Autònoma republicana y cosas así. [...] Más que imaginar un futuro distinto, soñábamos en recuperar un pasado decente. [...]. Teníamos la edad de los "soixante-huitards" y compartíamos su espíritu combativo, pero vivíamos en otra Europa (si es que lo era).'

This article brings together different traits of the memory of the *capuchinada*. On the one hand, the Spanish political normalisation is almost completed, and therefore Spain can take its place in the global contemporary history, including '68. On the other hand, the author rejects the identification, underlining the fact that the Spanish rebellious youth was less interested in individual liberation or global revolution and was focused instead on important issues like the autonomy of the university. This observation does not automatically imply a normative statement against the more 'frivolous' aspects of global 1968: the author of the article may even have been envious of his French and American counterparts, that could focus on countercultural struggles while Spaniards were still trying to gain some spaces for freedom in an authoritarian regime. The refusal of the generational aspects of '68 (clothing, challenge of past generations, etc.) makes the Spanish youth of the late '60s look more serious and moderate, or, simply, depicts it as part of a different Europe, in which university students were not in the conditions to worry about countercultural issues, yet. The references to the recuperation of the past, in a context in which this past is the unmentionable 2nd Republic, are in any case courageous and very interesting. In fact, they allow to note how the narrative of Spanish exceptionalism, with the connotation of the Spanish 1960 as more responsible and less revolutionary than the global 1968, is also shared by authors that are obviously on the left-wing of the political spectrum and even nostalgic about the Republic.

In the same period, historiography enters the field, with the newspapers frequently reporting the publication of academic works regarding the *capuchinada*²⁶⁵. This historicisation favours, together with the definitive normalisation of the Spanish political system in 1996, when the post-Francoist right entered government through democratic elections, another step towards the progressive liberation of the memory of the *capuchinada* from the narrative of the transition, and towards its use as a contentious memory. An article²⁶⁶ published in *El País* in 1997 is particularly explicit in this sense. It is titled 'Who killed Liberty Valance?', and the metaphor refers to the debate about who brought Spain to democracy. The article is a partial but open critique of the narrative of the 'pacted' transition, and a call to recuperate the memory of the

²⁶⁵ Piñol, R.M. 1993. Joan Crexell reconstruye y documenta la manifestación de curas de 1966. *La Vanguardia*, 20 Feb, p.34; Anonymous 1993. Balcells y Samper publican una historia 'no oficial' del 'escultisme' catalán. *La Vanguardia*, 16 Nov. p.38.

²⁶⁶ Altares, P. 1997. ¿Quién mató a Liberty Valance? *El País*, 31 Oct.

contribution from below to Spanish democratisation. Here are some brief excerpts of this long editorial:

There was a moment in which we only lacked posters and t-shirts. The transition, told in many cases more by mythomaniacs than by historians, was transformed into an object of cult [...] In general, memory lapses and forgetfulness proliferated. And with time passing, interpretations have become more sophisticated, simple and with a prevalence of individual behaviours over collective ones. [...] Gradually, a fiction has been emerging, according to which the passage from dictatorship to democracy was achieved based on a plan, elaborated in a laboratory and basically planned by the highest power. Thus, the vision of the transition as something that was awarded, became widespread, disguising what it really was: a collective adventure, in which a fundamental part of the path was achieved by walking, pushed from below, laboriously sought for years by thousands of Spaniards in secrecy and on the border of legality, widening day by day the space of what was possible, broadening with physical risk the cracks in the system. [...] Is it possible to explain the final outcome of the transition without speaking about the strikes in Asturias in the 1960s, about the student movements of 1968, about the writers of the so-called realist generation, about the capuchinada of Sarriá, about Triunfo and Cuadernos para el Diálogo, about the grassroots Christian associations, about Montejurra and Vitoria, and about many and many names and episodes that marked the struggle for freedom in our country? Without this previous struggle, it is not that the transition would have failed, but rather it would have never been considered. [...] If democracy was possible in Spain it was because many men and women worked restlessly to achieve it. [...] Does it make any sense to remember it now, when democracy is established and rooted in the Spanish society? It does, for obvious reasons, both structural and contingent. Memory stops the manipulation of history. And remembering the roots of our democracy, those who really made it possible, will stop its perversion and its unjust appropriation²⁶⁷.

²⁶⁷ ‘Hubo un momento en que sólo faltaron los pósters y las camisetas. La transición, contada en muchos casos más por mitómanos que por historiadores, se convirtió en objeto de culto. [...] En general, han proliferado las lagunas y las desmemorias. Y según ha ido pasando el tiempo, las interpretaciones se han hecho más sofisticadas, simples y con amplia primacía de los comportamientos individuales sobre los colectivos. [...] De hecho, paulatinamente ha ido avanzando la ficción de que el paso de la dictadura a la democracia fue una obra de diseño, elaborada como dentro de un alambique cerrado y planeada básicamente desde las alturas del poder. Así, va cundiendo la visión de una transición otorgada, encubridora de lo que realmente fue: una aventura colectiva, en la que una parte fundamental del camino se hizo al andar, impulsada desde abajo, trabajosamente buscada durante años por miles de españoles desde la clandestinidad y desde la frontera de la legalidad, ensanchando día a día el ámbito de lo posible, ampliando con riesgo físico los resquicios que ofrecía el sistema. [...] ¿Se puede explicar el éxito final de la transición sin hablar de las huelgas de Asturias de los años sesenta, de los movimientos estudiantiles del 68, de los escritores de la llamada generación realista, de la capuchinada de Sarriá, de Triunfo y de Cuadernos para el Diálogo, de las asociaciones cristianas de base, de Montejurra y de Vitoria, y de tantos y tantos nombres y episodios que van jalonando la lucha por la libertad en nuestro país? Sin esa lucha previa, la transición no es que hubiera fracasado, sino que jamás se hubiera podido plantear. [...] Si la democracia fue posible en España es porque muchos hombres y mujeres trabajaron sin descanso por conseguirla. [...] ¿Tiene sentido recordarlo ahora, cuando la democracia está asentada y enraizada en la

The article openly challenges the narrative of the transition as a top-down process, based on the individual choices of three people, and asks for recognition for the thousands of Spanish people who struggled for decades against the dictatorship. Words like ‘fiction’, ‘truth’, ‘manipulation’, and ‘perversion’ constitute the basic repertoire of the claim of the right to memory. And the *capuchinada* is one of the weapons used in this contention, to prove the conflictual and popular nature of Spanish democracy, and, at the same time, to ask for the accountability of those who, in this process, were on the wrong side.

In any case, this is a reflection of the debate on memory in the representation of the *capuchinada*, which never became as central as the topics connected with the 2nd Republic, the civil war and nationalisms. In the late 1990s, the *capuchinada* is rarely cited in articles connected with this debate²⁶⁸, while the process of inserting the event into the framework of the global '68 continues: the *capuchinada* was commemorated on the 30th anniversary of 1968²⁶⁹ and together with Raimon's concert at the University of Madrid (the real symbol of Spanish '68)²⁷⁰, was always accompanied by a reference to anti-Francoism. Slowly, the *capuchinada* became one of the intersection points of two different narratives which gradually merge: '68 and anti-Francoism. And, in the 2000s, the events started to be cited in contexts not even remotely connected with the struggle against the dictatorship, but only with *the '68-counterculture*:

A Barcelona governed by mayor Porcioles and agitated by the anti-Francoist struggle that gave place to the Caputxinada and to student riots [...] the first pictures of the peaceful hippie revolution in California.²⁷¹

As background music, the Rolling Stones and Els Tres Tambors... ‘We are the hippie generation, the one of the Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants in Barcelona and of the

sociedad española? Lo tiene por razones obvias, tanto de estructura como de coyuntura. La memoria impide la manipulación de la historia. Y recordar las raíces de nuestra democracia, quiénes de verdad la hicieron posible, es impedir su desnaturalización y su indebida apropiación.’

²⁶⁸ Piñol, R.M. 2003. Memoria de la resistencia. *La Vanguardia*, 17 Jun. p.35.

²⁶⁹ Anonymous 1998. Caldo de cultivo antifranquista. Tras el mayo del 68, empieza a percibirse un movimiento de lucha por las libertades.

²⁷⁰ Vidal-Folch, I. 1999. Vida y obra de Oriol Bohigas. *El País*, 21 Dec.

²⁷¹ ‘Una Barcelona gobernada por el alcalde Porcioles y agitada por la lucha antifranquista que dio lugar a la Caputxinada y a las revueltas estudiantiles.[...] primeras imágenes de la revolución pacifista hippy en California.’ Anonymous 2003. La historia de un peculiar vecino de barcelona. *La Vanguardia*, 25 Nov. p.2.

It looks like the memory debate has exploited most of the residual interest of the Spanish media in contemporary history: in 2006 the anniversary was totally ignored both by *La Vanguardia* and *El País*. In the Catalan newspaper, the only references were the announcement of a TV broadcast on the topic and a veteran's letter, calling for a commemoration at the university²⁷³, and in 2007 the *capuchinada* became one of the stages on a guided tour about the political history of Barcelona, together with the proclamation of the 2nd Republic and the execution of Puig Antich²⁷⁴.

5. 'En extrañas circunstancias': the memory and oblivion of Enrique Ruano's death

On the night of January 17th 1969, four young anti-Francoists were detained in Madrid. Three days later, one of them, Enrique Ruano Casanova, student of the Universidad Complutense and militant of the Popular Liberation Front would lose his life during the search of a flat in the city centre, while he was guarded by three agents of the state political police. (Domínguez Rama 2011a: back cover, my translation)

Shouting the slogan 'They murdered Enrique Ruano' the mobilisation in the university campuses of Madrid gradually grew until it provoked the almost total paralysis of academic life, involving the strike of most Spanish universities. Over the next few days, assemblies, incidents, and demonstrations at the university and in different places across the capital occurred as a sign of grief and protest [...]

On January 24th the continuing student protest caused the academic authorities to close the University of Madrid, while the minister Fraga announced a state of exception in the whole of Spain for a period of three months. (Domínguez Rama 2011b: 44-46, my translation)

²⁷² 'De música de fondo, Rolling Stones y Els Tres Tambors... "Somos la generación hippie, la del Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants de Barcelona y la Caputxinada"'. Roglan, J. 2006 La cara culta de La Paloma . *La Vanguardia*, 31 Dec. p.5.

²⁷³ Gassot, X. 2006. La Caputxinada . *La Vanguardia*, 17 Feb. p.4.

²⁷⁴ Anonymous 2007. Portabella presenta una nueva ruta turística. *La Vanguardia*, 22 Apr. p.4.

	ABC	El País	La Vanguardia		ABC	El País	La Vanguardia
1969	6	\	9	1990	1	2	0
1970	3	\	4	1991	0	0	0
1971	1	\	1	1992	0	13	0
1972	0	\	0	1993	2	1	1
1973	0	\	0	1994	5	13	2
1974	0	\	0	1995	1	0	0
1975	0	\	0	1996	3	9	6
1976	0	0	0	1997	0	0	0
1977	0	2	0	1998	1	0	0
1978	0	0	0	1999	1	1	0
1979	0	4	0	2000	0	0	0
1980	1	3	0	2001	1	1	1
1981	0	3	0	2002	4	3	0
1982	0	0	0	2003	0	3	0
1983	0	0	1	2004	1	3	1
1984	0	4	0	2005	0	4	2
1985	1	1	1	2006	0	1	1
1986	0	0	0	2007	1	3	0
1987	0	1	0	2008	1	6	0
1988	0	1	0	2009	3	8	0
1989	0	0	0				

Table 5.2 Articles containing the phrase ‘Enrique Ruano’ in *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* between 1969 and 2009.

On January 21st 1969, both *ABC*²⁷⁵ and *La Vanguardia*²⁷⁶ published a statement issued by the press office of the *Dirección General de Seguridad*, titled in the former newspaper ‘Five communists detained. One committed suicide by jumping from seventh floor’²⁷⁷ and in the latter ‘Suicide of a student after his detention in Madrid’²⁷⁸.

On the night of the 7th, 17 people were brought by the police to the headquarters of the Police in Madrid: Enrique Ruano Casanova, fifth-year student of law [...], accusing the first two of having thrown in the street public propaganda of the Workers' Committees, in the presence of an armed policeman who saw this without any doubt, following them towards a bar in which they met with two others, verifying that they carried documents related to clandestine activities of a communist nature. [...] The personality of the two detainees, the study of the documents, motivated the highest attention of the officers of the first group of the Brigade of Social Investigation of the headquarters of the Police in Madrid, succeeding in verifying the existence of a Marxist organisation called the ‘Revolutionary Communist Party’, the establishment of which seems to have taken place in Barcelona, and in which the four detainees, and other people to need to be identified, participated. [...] It was also found that Enrique Ruano Casanova was in possession of some keys that did not correspond of those of his residence, admitting in the end that they were for a flat he rented to hide and meet with friends. [...] Once a warrant was obtained, three inspectors brought the detainees to the building. [...] Before being brought to General Mola, number 60, the detainee had signed a preview of his statement, being the person that most explicitly had spoken until then, recognising that he and the others belonged to the Revolutionary Communist Party.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁵ Anonymous 1969. Cinco comunistas, detenidos. Uno se suicidó arrojándose desde un séptimo piso. *ABC*, 21 Jan. p.13.

²⁷⁶ Anonymous 1969. Suicidio de un estudiante tras su detención en Madrid. Nota de la Dirección General de Seguridad. *La Vanguardia*, 21 Jan. p.9.

²⁷⁷ ‘Cinco comunistas, detenidos. Uno se suicidó arrojándose desde un séptimo piso.’

²⁷⁸ ‘Suicidio de un estudiante tras su detención en Madrid.’

²⁷⁹ ‘En la noche del pasado día, 17 fueron presentados por la policía, en la Jefatura Superior de Policía de: Madrid, Enrique Ruano Casanova, estudiante de quinto de Derecho [...], acusando a los dos primeros de haber arrojado en la vía pública propaganda de las Comisiones Obreras, según comparecencia de un policía armado que los vio sin ningún género de dudas, siguiéndolos hasta un bar en el que se encontraban acompañados de los otros dos, comprobando que llevaban documentos relacionados con actividades clandestinas de carácter comunista. [...] La personalidad de los detenidos, y el estudio de los documentos ocupados, motivaron la máxima atención de los funcionarios del primer grupo de la Brigada de Investigación Social de la Jefatura Superior de Policía de Madrid, logrando averiguar la existencia de una organización marxista titulada “Partido Comunista Revolucionario”, cuyo origen parece tener lugar en Barcelona, y en el que militaban los cuatro detenidos y otras personas que se trata de identificar. [...] También se comprobó que Enrique Ruano Casanova tenía en su poder unas llaves que no coincidían con las de su domicilio, manifestando, por último, que eran de un piso que tenía alquilado para ocultarse y para reunirse con amigos. [...] Una vez obtenido el mandamiento, tres inspectores llevaron al detenido Enrique Ruano al inmueble [...] Antes de ser conducido a General Mola, número 60, el detenido había firmado un avance de su declaración, que ya estaba ultimada, siendo la persona que más explícitamente había hablado hasta el momento, reconociendo que tanto él como los otros detenidos pertenecía al Partido

Both newspapers, presumably answering a direct request of minister Fraga, mentioned the suicide in the title, in order not to leave to chance any alternative interpretation. Interestingly enough, the articles do not cite the organisation to which Ruano belonged, the *Frente de Liberación Popular*, a clandestine organisation mainly based in the universities, which was born in the late 1950s as a group of leftist Catholics and later evolved towards critical heterodox Marxism, criticising from the left the PCE and being one of the major interpreters of the radicalisation of the Spanish youth between 1968 and 1969. (Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer and Baldó Lacomba 2007: 217-276). Ruano is accused of being in possession of propaganda material of the *Comisiones Obreras* (which is possible, given the known attempt of the FLP to recruit from the workers' movement) and of documents regarding the establishment of a 'Communist Revolutionary Party', one of the projects that some FLP militants were discussing during that period (Domínguez Rama 2011b: 42). It is curious that the police would cite the name of two clandestine organisations, one quite well known (CC.OO.) and the other non-existing (PCR), whilst avoiding mentioning the FLP. The simplest hypothesis is that the government wanted to avoid an angry reaction in the university. This plan failed: both newspapers, in the following days, reported assemblies, strikes and demonstrations connected with the death of Ruano in Madrid, in the context of an ongoing wave of student mobilisation all around the country²⁸⁰. *La Vanguardia*, although based in Barcelona, covered the demonstration more extensively and regularly than *ABC*, reporting the students' rage and their rejection of the hypothesis of suicide, which was shared by Ruano's family:

The participants complained about the information that appeared in the Madrid press, and, after a student stated with certainty that it was not true that Enrique Ruano wanted to commit suicide, as some newspapers of the capital had said, they threw some copies on the ground to burn them. [...] 'I am doing this' – Mr Ruano went on - 'so that a rectification is published in the press, and I am asking in the tribunal that the facts are clarified and the

Comunista Revolucionario.'

²⁸⁰ Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Incidentes en la Universidad de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 22 Jan. p.8; Anonymous 1969. Numerosos incidentes con la fuerza pública en el 'campus' y calles inmediatas. *ABC*, 22 Jan. p.23; Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Ayer no hubo clase en derecho, políticas y filosofía y letras. *La Vanguardia*, 23 Jan. p.10; Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Continúa la situación de anormalidad en la Universidad de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 24 Jan. p.8; Anonymous. 1969. La situación estudiantil. Ayer fue cerrada la Universidad de Madrid. Nota del Rectorado. *La Vanguardia*, 25 Jan. p.6

good name of my son is restored.’²⁸¹

Various political groups developed different mnemonic projects, proposing different versions of the death of this young student, its political meaning, and the correct reaction. From other sources it is possible to learn the varying attitudes of the clandestine PCE and SDEUM (*Sindicato Democrático de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Madrid*), proposing peaceful mobilisations, and of the anarchist union CNT and other more radical underground groups, proposing ‘revolutionary violence’ (Domínguez Rama 2011b: 50), but obviously this debate did not reach the press.

Nevertheless, the press censorship is visibly weaker than in the case of the *capuchinada*, probably for various reasons, among which the *Ley Fraga*, the particular gravity of the events (the death of a student and the mobilisation of hundreds), which were also covered in the foreign press (Domínguez Rama 2011c: 401-402), and the fact that these events were not isolated, but happened at the apex of the wave of student mobilisation that started in 1966 (Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer and Baldó Lacomba 2007: 217-276), and after the global protests of 1968, which gave the students legitimacy as political actors.

Therefore, it is possible to find various articles on the debates about student violence and others suggesting to remain calm in order not to provoke a reaction from the police. Furthermore, some articles testify to the use of the traditional leftist symbol by some of the protesters, such as the red flag with sickle and hammer, the Spanish republican flag, and the raised fist²⁸² and in other articles the presence of fascist groups in visible, like the FES (*Frente de Estudiantes Sindicalistas*), celebrating Ruano ‘not because of his ideas [...] but for being a fellow student’²⁸³, or the *Defensa Universitaria*, a group that specialised in attacking leftist students (Sánchez Soler 1996), which was also involved in violent clashes on this occasion²⁸⁴.

²⁸¹ ‘Los asistentes se quejaron de la información aparecida en la prensa de Madrid y después de que un estudiante afirmase con seguridad que no era verdad que Enrique Ruano quería suicidarse, tal como habían afirmado algunos periódicos de esta capital, se arrojaron ejemplares al suelo para quemarlos. [...] “Estoy gestionando” – continuó el señor Ruano – “que se publique una nota de rectificación en la prensa, así como la demanda correspondiente ante los Tribunales para que se aclaren los hechos y se reivindique el buen nombre de mi hijo.”’ Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Incidentes en la Universidad de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 22 Jan. p.8.

²⁸² Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Incidentes en la Universidad de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 22 Jan. p.8.

²⁸³ Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Ayer no hubo clase en derecho, políticas y filosofía y letras. *La Vanguardia*, 23 Jan. p.10.

²⁸⁴ Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Continúa la situación de anormalidad en la Universidad de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 24 Jan. p.8.

The left and the student movement were developing, albeit at different degrees of intensity, a mnemonic project aimed at representing Enrique Ruano as a student activist that became an innocent victim of Franco's police, while the Falangist right at first tried to appropriate the memory of Ruano by depoliticising it, and later, having observed the failure of this strategy, by repressing it.

These two different strategies promoted by the right can also be seen in the attitude of the government. At first, in fact, the regime tried to depoliticise Ruano's death, by proposing the hypothesis of his suicide and pushing *ABC* to publish some pages from Ruano's personal diary²⁸⁵ together with an editorial titled 'A victim, yes, but of whom?'²⁸⁶. The following day it was also published in *La Vanguardia*²⁸⁷:

In light of the illuminating and terrible documents of which we are in possession, and that we publish below in a condensed version, we can affirm that the poor boy Enrique Ruano Casanova, of whose suicide we covered in our paper yesterday, was, in fact, a victim. A victim, yes. But of whom? From the extracts from the diary of this unfortunate suicide victim, the following facts can be deduced: Enrique Ruano Casanova – son of a very honourable and respectable family of Madrid – suffered a tremendous depressive crisis, an inferiority complex, a pathetic frustration with his intellectual capabilities and the clear sense of feeling oppressed, used by other hands: 'Hell is other people', one of the paragraphs of the diary says. [...] In light of the facts, it is infinitely despicable and perverse on the part of those who dragged him out of the Law, to have used for their subversive action a poor boy clearly suffering from psychopathy, transforming him into someone uprooted from the society in which he lived. [...] All the respect that invades us when reading this diary – well, who can avoid feeling it, trespassing on the privacy of a persecuted and ill soul [...] is transformed into indignation and burning disgust at seeing him exploited in this way, mercilessly, his weakness, his incapacity to react and impose himself, to break the net into which he was sewn.

The detention of the four communists, on one of whose errands Enrique Ruano Casanova committed his sad suicidal intention, has been the pretext for which the troublemakers went back yesterday to heavily disrupt the university order. Red flags with sickle and hammer, republican flags, subversive banners, tumultuous assemblies, attacks on police cars...

[...] Black ribbons have wept for the suicide of a boy. But this debt that we all deplore, on whose account do we have to charge it? Can the subversion refuse to recognise it as its

²⁸⁵ Anonymous 1969. Del diario de Enrique Ruano. *ABC*, 22 Jan. p.16.

²⁸⁶ Anonymous 1969. Víctima, sí, ¿pero de quién? *ABC*, 22 Jan. p.16.

²⁸⁷ Anonymous 1969. Víctima, sí, ¿pero de quién? *La Vanguardia*, 23 Jan. p.11.

work? A victim, yes: but of whom?²⁸⁸

It is difficult to avoid a moral judgement on an article like this, speculating on the personal notes of a young man in order to find some psychological weakness able to justify the official version of the suicide. Nevertheless, the analysis of this text shows a precise strategy: by denying any political affiliation and conviction of Ruano, who is unequivocally a victim, *ABC* (and the minister Fraga) tries to depoliticise his death and appropriate it, blaming the other people arrested for exploiting his alleged psychological problems for political reasons. It is an ambitious attempt by the right and the government to compete with the left and the student movement in the struggle for the appropriation of Ruano's memory.

It does not work. Two days later *ABC* is already defending itself with two different articles: an open letter²⁸⁹, signed by editor and owner Torcuato Luca de Tena, to writer Julián Ayesta, that in the newspaper *SP* has criticised the publication of Ruano's diary describing it as 'intolerable'; and another article²⁹⁰ in which the choice of the publication of the diary is justified in order to 'cut off at the root the poisonous plant of slander'²⁹¹, the 'distortion of truth, that could present the unfortunate ending of a like as a violent and criminal fact, hand begun to become widespread'²⁹², that is the

²⁸⁸ A la luz de los esclarecedores y terribles documentos que obran en nuestro poder, y que publicamos muy reducidos a continuación, podemos afirmar que él pobre muchacho Enrique Ruano Casanova, de cuyo suicidio dimos cuenta en nuestro numero de ayer, ha sido, en efecto, una víctima. Víctima, sí. Pero ¿de quién? De los textos entresacados de las páginas del diario del desventurado suicida se desprende cesadoramente esta triste verdad: Enrique Ruano Casanova—hijo de una familia dignísima y respetabilísima de Madrid—padecía una tremenda crisis depresiva, un invencible complejo de inferioridad, una frustración patética de sus posibilidades intelectuales y el claro sentido de sentirse oprimido, utilizado por otras manos: "Los otros son el infierno", dice en uno de los párrafos de su diario. [...] A la luz de los hechos resulta infinitamente despreciable y perverso por parte de quienes le arrastraron fuera de la Ley haber utilizado para la acción subversiva a un pobre muchacho tocado de una clara y típica psicopatía, convirtiéndole en un desarraigado de la sociedad en que vivía. [...] Todo el respeto que nos invade al leer este diario—pues ¿cómo no sentirlo al penetrar en la intimidad de un alma perseguida, y enferma, de un ser acorralado que palpita en la angustia?—se torna indignación y encendida repulsa al ver aprovechada así, tan despiadadamente, su debilidad, su incapacidad para reaccionar y sobreponerse; para romper la red donde estaba cosido. La detención de los cuatro comunistas, en una de cuyas posteriores diligencias consumó su triste propósito suicida Enrique Ruano Casanova, ha sido pretexto para que los revoltosos volvieran ayer a perturbar gravemente el orden universitario. Banderas rojas con la hoz y el martillo, banderas republicanas, carteles subversivos, Asambleas tumultuarias, agresiones a coches de policía...[...] Crespones negros han llorado el suicidio de un muchacho. Pero esta muerte, que todos deploramos, ¿a la cuenta de quién hay que cargarla? ¿Puede rechazarla acaso, como obra sayá, la subversión? Víctima, sí; ¿pero de quién?

²⁸⁹ Luca de Tena, T. 1969. Una macabra villanía. *ABC*, 24 Jan. p.16.

²⁹⁰ Anonymous. 1969. Los caramelos envenenados. *ABC*, 24 Jan. p.16.

²⁹¹ 'cortar, de raíz, la venenosa planta de la maledicencia'

²⁹² 'deformación de la verdad, la que podía presentar el lamentabilísimo desenlace de una vida como un hecho violento con tipificación penal, había comenzado a extenderse'

accusation of the police of murdering Ruano. Another article defending *ABC* is published on the same day in *El Alcazar* and copied the day after in *ABC*²⁹³. But it is too late: Ruano's father, a public prosecutor, has already announced he will take judicial action for his son's death²⁹⁴, and this, together with the students publicly burning copies of *ABC* at the university²⁹⁵, is enough to convince the newspaper and the government to change attitude.

ABC dropped the issue, and, a few months later, sought a public reconciliation with the Ruano family, with Torcuato Luca de Tena apologising for publishing the private notes and for offending the memory of the student²⁹⁶. And in the meantime, on January 24th, the Minister of Information Manuel Fraga Iribarne proclaimed the state of exception, starting an unprecedented wave of repressions that included the deportation of professors and the arrests of hundreds of students (Jáuregui and Vega 2007: 550-552), dissolving *de facto* the FLP and producing the swift, although temporary, decline of the student mobilisation (Domínguez Rama 2011b: 51; Hernández Sandoica, Ruiz Carnicer and Baldó Lacomba 2007: 266-267; Pastor 2008: 294).

Accounts of student strikes and demonstrations with the precise reference to the anniversary of Ruano's death were published both in *La Vanguardia* and in *ABC* (almost identical articles, provided by the same agency, Europa Press) in January 1970²⁹⁷ and 1971²⁹⁸. The suicide hypothesis has totally disappeared from the newspapers, which now use generic words like 'falleció' ('he fell') or 'murió' ('he died') and inaugurate the expression 'en extrañas circunstancias' ('in strange circumstances') that will be quasi-ubiquitous in the articles referring to Enrique Ruano in the next decades.

The memory of Enrique Ruano disappears in the 1970s, apart from some references, that can be found only in *El País* (not in *La Vanguardia* or *ABC*), on the occasion of the

²⁹³ C., I., 1969. Nota urgente. Apostillas a lo intolerable. *ABC*, 25 Jan. p.19.

²⁹⁴ Anonymous 1969. El padre del estudiante Enrique Ruano actuará en el sumario que se instruye por la muerte de su hijo. *La Vanguardia*, 24 Jan. p.6.

²⁹⁵ Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Incidentes en la Universidad de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 22 Jan. p.8.; Anonymous 1969. La situación estudiantil. Ayer no hubo clase en derecho, políticas y filosofía y letras. *La Vanguardia*, 23 Jan. p.10.

²⁹⁶ Anonymous 1969. Enrique Ruano Casanova. *ABC*, 30 May p.32; V, L. 1969. Acto de conciliación entre "ABC" y la familia de Enrique Ruano. *La Vanguardia*, 31 May p.8.

²⁹⁷ Anonymous 1970. En general, asistencia numerosa a clase en Madrid y discreto conflicto en Medicina. *La Vanguardia*, 20 Jan. p.6; Anonymous 1970. Gran numero de alumnos de medicina acuerdan continuar la inasistencia a clase. *ABC*, 20 Jan. p.24; Anonymous 1970. Incidentes estudiantiles en diversas zonas de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 21 Jan. p.7; Anonymous 1971. Incidentes en la ciudad universitaria y en varios puntos cercanos de la capital. *ABC*, 21 Jan. p.23.

²⁹⁸ Anonymous 1971. Enfrentamiento estudiantil en la facultad de derecho. *ABC*, 21 Jan. p.22; Anonymous 1971. Fracasa intento de manifestación en la Universidad de Madrid. *La Vanguardia*, 21 Jan. p.9.

‘matanza de Atocha’: the murder of some labour lawyers connected with the clandestine CC.OO. and PCE, by a commando of neo-fascist terrorists. In fact, one of the injured lawyers, María Dolores González Ruiz, the wife of a victim, Javier Sauquillo Pérez, had in 1969 been the girlfriend of ‘Enrique Ruano, que falleció en extrañas circunstancias’²⁹⁹. Interestingly enough, the article does not mention either the CC.OO or the PCE, both illegal, while CC.OO is mentioned in 1969. It looks like the press office of Franco's police in 1969 could afford to be less strict than the cautious self-censorship of the democratic press in the transition. The same expression ‘en extrañas circunstancias’ would be used later in other references to Ruano related to Dolores González Ruiz and the trial for the massacre of Atocha³⁰⁰ in the '80s.

Until the beginning of the '70s, the memory of Ruano is internal to a cycle of a protest, it is related to a fact that happened during a wave of mobilisation, directly involving an activist, and it is appropriated by the movement as a symbol of what they are protesting against. After the end of the student wave of mobilisation, there is no social actor appropriating the memory of Ruano's death in order to develop a mnemonic project. From the late 1970s on, the media filled this void. *El País*, for example, frequently cites Ruano in a continuous polemic against its conservative competitor *ABC*. In 1977, the art critic Juan Manuel Bonet criticised another art expert, and disqualifies his opinion writing that:

My hope, I am sorry, cannot be the same as one who pretends to have fought for democracy, from the newspaper that published excerpts from Enrique Ruano's diary, or that celebrated on the frontpage the Chilean coup. I do not feel anything in common – and in particular, hope – with one who cultivated his ‘liberal spirit’ in the *ABC* of the Luca de Tena family [...]. There are people who did not wait until 1977 to feel like a democrat and to be it in fact, and in the worst moments. But how strange it is that the ‘democratic’ credentials of an independent report smell so bad.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Anonymous 1977. Tres muertos en el ametrallamiento de un bufete laboralista madrileño. *El País*, 25 Jan.

³⁰⁰ F., R. 1980. Crispado silencio durante la declaración de Dolores González. *El País*, 20 Feb.; Anonymous 1980. Las víctimas de la matanza de Atocha fueron tiroteadas por la espalda. *El País*, 20 Feb.; Anonymous 1984, Siete días que conmovieron a España. *El País*, 16 Sep.

³⁰¹ ‘Mi esperanza, lo siento, no puede ser la misma que la de quien pretende haber luchado por la democracia, desde el periódico que publicó fragmentos, amañados tras su muerte, del diario de Enrique Ruano, o que se alegró en portada del golpe chileno. No me siento nada en común -y menos, una esperanza- con quien ha cultivado su “espíritu liberal” en el *ABC* de los Luca de Tena [...]. Gente hay en esas publicaciones, que no ha esperado a 1977 para sentirse demócrata, para serlo efectivamente, y en los peores momentos. Pero qué extraño que huelan tan mal todas las credenciales “democráticas” de un cronista independiente.’ Bonet, J. M. 1977. Réplica a Manrique de Lara. *El País*, 11 Aug.

This is an open challenge to the narrative of the transition, and *ABC*, especially as far as concerns Ruano's death, is the symbol of the conservative right that is enjoying the democracy without having fought for it. From this point of view, the memory of Enrique Ruano is less ambiguous than the commemoration of the *capuchinada*, because, while the latter could be appropriated also by the supporters of an evolutionary view of Spanish politics, interpreting 1966 as a brave gesture of protest which helped the peaceful evolution of the regime into democracy (even if, as I have shown, this is not the only interpretation), the former challenges some of the founding pillars of the narrative of the transition, unequivocally pointing out the repressive and violent nature of Franco's dictatorship, and implicitly asking for justice. In fact, this article was published two months after the first democratic elections and two months before the passing of the *Ley de Amnistía*, which would play a relevant role in the future.

The attacks against *ABC* as the hired killer of the dictatorship would go on for years: the conservative newspaper is defined as 'shameful and manipulative'³⁰², 'the famous newspaper of Madrid [that] published that slander on Enrique Ruano'³⁰³, 'those who wrote unforgettable pages of the universal history of journalistic infamy manipulating the diary of Enrique Ruano, in 1969, to present his alleged murder at the hands of the police as the suicide of a mentally unbalanced person'³⁰⁴. Furthermore, Ruano's death has become the canon of disinformation in the Spanish public sphere not only with regard to the media, but also to the government: in December 1979, after two students were killed during a demonstration, *El País* exhorts the government to be transparent and tell the truth, clearly showing the difference between dictatorship and democracy. The newspaper remembers the disinformation strategy used by minister Fraga to 'prolong the death of the student Enrique Ruano in a moral murder'³⁰⁵ and urges the government to demonstrate with facts 'the difference between past and present'³⁰⁶.

The same attitude appears again a few days later, in a new article on the same topic and

³⁰² 'infamante y manipulador'. Anonymous 1979. La nueva máscara de lo de siempre. *El País*, 15 Jul.

³⁰³ 'el famoso matutino madrileño [que] publicó aquella infamia sobre Enrique Ruano'. Anonymous 1981. ¿A quién temía Blas de Otero? *El País*, 17 Feb.

³⁰⁴ 'los que escribieron páginas inolvidables en la historia universal de la infamia periodística manipulando el diario de Enrique Ruano, en 1969, para presentar su presunto asesinato a manos de la policía como el suicidio de un desequilibrado.' Anonymous 1990. Problemas pendientes de la democracia. *El País*, 19 Mar.

³⁰⁵ 'prolongar la muerte del estudiante Enrique Ruano en un asesinato moral.' Pradera, J. 1979. Voces secretas y secretos a voces. *El País*, 16 Dec.

³⁰⁶ 'La diferencia entre el pasado y el presente.'

event, once again remembering Ruano not only because, once again, student activists have mysteriously died, but also because the government is using the same disinformation tactics that Francoism used:

We have lived in these days, perhaps, the saddest events in the history of the Suárez reform. Balance: two dead students. I cannot remember, since the year 1956, at the beginning of the student movement, or since the death of Enrique Ruano, something as shameful as the manipulation with which the power is informing us of what happened.³⁰⁷

And five days later, Fernando Savater, one of the most relevant Spanish intellectuals, intervened in the same way, listing the attitude of the government led by Adolfo Suárez towards the death of two student demonstrators as one of the main reasons for alarm among the Spanish society and the end of the decade:

In January 1969, at the beginning of the last year of the last decade, my friend Enrique Ruano was killed by the Francoist police. The *Abc* of Torcuato Luca de Tena – how much we owed it in holy wrath against the repulsive ‘chivalrous’ Spanish right! – published an article of particular vileness (even for its standards) on Enrique and a nauseating editorial (‘A victim, yes; but of whom?’) that was enthusiastically read on the TV news. Blessed time, the one in which the dictator and his accomplices went on with cynical insolence with the *necessary* crimes to stop the *irresponsible provokers*. Also today we have two dead students [...], clearly the responsibility of the police [...], and the same manipulative information on TV, identical slanderous insinuation, [...], the same hypocritical and sterile compassion [...] Yesterday someone complained about the ‘political disenchantment’ of the youth that does not care about anything; if those that are not disenchanted are disenchanted with gunshots, youthful caution will consist in disenchanting themselves from passion which will provoke lead poisoning and will start to prepare opposition or guerrillas³⁰⁸.

³⁰⁷ ‘Hemos vivido estos días, quizá, los acontecimientos más tristes de la historia de la reforma Suárez. Saldo: dos estudiantes muertos. No recuerdo, desde el año 1956, en los comienzos del movimiento estudiantil, o desde la muerte de Enrique Ruano, algo tan vergonzoso como la manipulación con que el poder ha informado de lo acaecido.’ Gonzáles Muñoz, J. M. 1979. Políticos y orden público. *El País*, 22 Dec.

³⁰⁸ ‘En enero de 1969, comenzado el último año de la década pasada, fue asesinado por la policía franquista mi amigo y compañero Enrique Ruano. El *Abc* de Torcuato Luca de Tena – ¡cuánto le debemos en santa cólera contra la repulsiva derecha “caballerosa” española! – publicó un reportaje de singular vileza (incluso dentro de sus paradigmas) sobre Enrique y un nauseabundo editorial (“Víctima, sí; pero ¿de quién?”) que fue entusiásticamente leído en el Telediario. Dichosa época en la que el dictador y sus cómplices cargaban con cínico descaro con los crímenes *necesarios* que acababan con los *provocadores irresponsables*. Hoy también tenemos dos estudiantes (estudiantes, sí, señor Seara; provocadores, no, señor Ibáñez Freire, señor Carrillo) muertos, una responsabilidad policial clara, aunque los responsables estén confusos por el embrollamiento deliberado de los portavoces gubernamentales, y la misma información manipuladora en Televisión, idénticas insinuaciones calumniosas, las mismas

The last sentence shows Savater's ability in using against the government of the transition its own symbolic weapons: as I have already said, the narrative of the transition is based on the concept of the reconciliation between the two sides of the civil war, challenging the Francoist idea of the impossibility of democracy in Spain and of the need for dictatorship to avoid a new civil war, and proposing liberal democracy and political moderation, together with the oblivion of the past, as the 'golden mean' to grant peace and stability. In this case, Savater points out that, if the government appears to be on the side of whom is shooting the active part of the youth, the youth could choose to oppose this government, even with armed violence. A credible threat, in the Spain of the late '70s, with both the ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, Marxist and Basque independence armed group) and GRAPO (*Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre*, Maoist armed group) still active.

Both the intrinsic characteristics of the story of Enrique Ruano and its immediate appropriation by the clandestine left and the student movement, during a wave of mobilisation, makes it more difficult to insert in the narrative of the transition. Different actors react to this difficulty by developing different strategies, than can be traced in the pages of the three newspapers I am analysing.

ABC chooses silence. The attempt to stop the left from appropriating Ruano's story by depoliticising it and trying to make him a victim of the same left, in 1969, failed, significantly damaging the already compromised reputation of the newspaper in the democratic public opinion. In the '70s and '80s, until the reopening of the trial in 1994, Enrique Ruano's name disappears from the pages *ABC*.

The same happens in *La Vanguardia*: in relation to the *capuchinada*, in which a relevant part of the Catalan elite of the '80s had participated, Ruano's death is less related to the local context, and at the same time more difficult to fit into the framework of the transition. In 1983 *La Vanguardia* interviewed the film director Josefina Molina about her project to write a TV series on the 1970s, and two of her answers are particularly meaningful. While mentioning some episodes cited in the series, the film director

presuposiciones de "ocultas manos en la sombra" o "planes perfectamente urdidos", la misma compasión hipócrita y estéril, tanto entre los gobernantes de derecha como entre los aspirantes de izquierda, todos los cuales están firmemente convencidos de la imprescriptibilidad política de estas necesidades criminales. Ayer se lamentaban del "desencanto político" de la juventud que "pasa" de todo; si al que no se desencanta solo lo desencantan a tiros, será prudencia juvenil irse desencantando de aficiones que dan empachos de plomo y comenzar a preparar oposiciones o la guerrilla.' Savater, F. 1979. El final de la década. *El País*, 27 Dec.

repeats the known expression ‘en extrañas circunstancias’³⁰⁹ for Ruano's death, but at the same time says that Enrique Ruano ‘se tiró por la ventana’ (‘he jumped out of the window’), supporting the version of the suicide, ‘de la comisaría de policía’, while it actually happened in a building that the police were searching. Furthermore, she describes as a ‘tiroteo’ (‘gunfight’) what was universally known as ‘la matanza de Atocha’. In the following paragraph, when asked about the reason for her project, she was clear about her desire to focus on individual and generational traits, stating: ‘the majority of the men that now are in power, were then young people with illusions and hopes, and now look where they are’³¹⁰. Ruano's story was still controversial enough to be treated using official police language, but it was gradually becoming part of a narrative of the past that can be represented without particular political connotation, in the attempt to reconstruct the turbulent past of today's ruling class.

The same traits can be found in an article published in 1985, when the regional government of Madrid, led by the socialists, moved into the buildings that once hosted the *Dirección General de Seguridad*, where Ruano was held: ‘all the political class of today walked in its premises in unpleasant circumstances.’³¹¹

In general, the same narrative of the transition and Spanish exceptionalism that I have described with regards to the *capuchinada*, are the lenses through which *La Vanguardia* looks at the recent past even in the early 1990s, as an article published for the 25th anniversary of 1968 shows:

I cannot avoid smiling every time I listen to some 40-year-old referring to himself as a member of the generation of May 1968. [...] For the Spaniards that memorable month of May 1968 did not exist, or, to say it better, when we heard about it, it was already too late and then we transformed it into legend, dreams and frustration. There was, yes, a movement in Paris that influenced everywhere, but back then Spain was at the border between Africa and the European, Western and democratic civilisation. We exported migrants like Morocco does now. [...] We lived in a dictatorship during one of its most critical phases. It is enough to understand it, the fact that the most notable events of that stage – now remembered as authentic milestones of our history – consisted in the concert

³⁰⁹ Cenalmor, I. 1983. De Santa Teresa a la transición, un paso. Josefina Molina prepara una serie sobre los años 70. *La Vanguardia*, 6 May p.66.

³¹⁰ ‘La mayoría de los hombres que hoy están en el poder entonces eran jóvenes con ilusiones y con esperanzas, y ahora mírales dónde están.’

³¹¹ ‘Toda la clase política del momento ha pasado por sus dependencias en circunstancias poco agradables.’ Trenas, M. A. 1985. Leguina quiere el despacho en el kilómetro cero. *La Vanguardia*, 27 Jan. p.13.

by Raimon in the department of Economics in Madrid and the obscure death of a student, Enrique Ruano, in January 1969, when he was about to be detained. This was the apex of our Hispanic 1968, the reaction to which, even if limited to a minority, provoked a particularly violent state of exception. [...] In France they aspired to change the world, in Spain we aspired to the fact that in the morning it was the milkman who woke us up and not the police. The difference between changing a society and bringing down a regime.³¹²

The article makes fun of the artificial construction of a memory of 1968 in Spain, making the ‘democratisation’ trait prevail over all the others and interpreting all Spanish contemporary history through the lenses of Francoism and the transition to democracy. In the author's words, the Spanish '68 did not exist, because Franco did not allow it to, and nothing happened in the Spanish universities until Franco's death, apart from the frustrated dreams of some bourgeois xenophiles. Interestingly enough, this article, which denies the existence of a Spanish '68, cites exactly the two events that will become the symbols of the Spanish '68 in the following years: the concert of Valencian singer Raimon at the University of Madrid in 1968 and the ‘obscure’ death of Enrique Ruano in 1969.

The discourse that developed on the pages of *El País* is more complex and articulated. In 1984, two different articles referred to Ruano's death in very different ways: in the announcement of the broadcasting on TV of a film on the ‘matanza de Atocha’, Ruano died ‘en circunstancias muy extrañas’³¹³, while, a few weeks later, in an editorial on the contemporary student protest, he ‘died [...] by the police’³¹⁴. *El País*, also on this occasion, presented its own recognisable version of the hegemonic narrative of the transition, that on the one hand is used against the protesters, saying that ‘it cannot be

³¹² ‘No puedo evitar la sonrisa cada vez que escucho a algún cuarentón prolongado referirse a sí mismo como miembro de la generación de mayo del 68. Suelen ser individuos con presente sustancioso, es decir, con el riñón cubierto. [...] Para los españoles aquel memorable mes de mayo de 1968 no existió, o por mejor decir, cuando nosotros nos enteramos era ya demasiado tarde y entonces lo convertimos en leyenda, sueño y frustración. Hubo, eso sí, un movimiento en París que influyó por doquier, pero entonces España estaba en la linde entre África y la civilización europea, occidental y democrática. Exportábamos emigrantes como ahora Marruecos y recogíamos divisas como ahora Argelia. Existían los Pirineos y se encargaba de recordárnoslo con un rigor implacable la Guardia Civil de fronteras. [...] Vivíamos en una dictadura durante uno de sus períodos más críticos. Basta con señalar que los hechos más notables de aquella etapa -hoy recordados como auténticos jalones de nuestra historiase concretaron en un recital de Raimon en la Facultad de Económicas de Madrid y la oscura muerte de un estudiante, Enrique Ruano, en enero de 1969, cuando iba a ser detenido. Este fue el auténtico colofón de nuestro 68 hispano, cuyas reacciones, aunque minoritarias, provocaron un estado de excepción especialmente virulento.[...] En Francia ambicionaban cambiar el mundo, en España aspirábamos a que por la mañana nos despertara el lechero y no la policía. La diferencia entre cambiar una sociedad y derribar un régimen.’ Moran, G. 1993. ¿Existió aquel Mayo o lo imaginamos? *La Vanguardia*, 24 Apr. p.19.

³¹³ Anonymous 1984. Siete días que conmovieron a España. *El País*, 16 Sep.

³¹⁴ ‘muerto [...] por la policía’. Anonymous 1984. La protesta universitaria. *El País*, 14 Nov.

excluded, but it has not been proven, that some mobilisations of this kind rest on strategies and organisations that pursue destabilising goals'³¹⁵, but on the other hand urges the government to consider their demands, in order not to 'increase their proclivity to join any protest'³¹⁶.

Nine years after Franco's death, with a socialist party in the government, a student protest is still seen as something that could destabilise Spain – perhaps with the cooperation of the post-Francoist right – and the main reason the government should avoid violent repression and should create a dialogue with the students is to avoid bigger and more dangerous protests. But, at the same time, *El País* publishes articles on the history of the FLP³¹⁷, articles questioning the official version of Ruano's death³¹⁸, and, above all, articles that start to create the foundations of the future debate on memory, citing Enrique Ruano, together with Julián Grimau and other victims, while complaining about the invisibility of the memory of anti-Francoist struggles. It is still a quite small phenomenon, limited only to *El País* and to very few articles, but a canon of the victims of Francoism slowly starts to be built, together with the increasing reference to a participation from below in the democratisation of the country. An article in 1981 cites 'Salvador Puig Antich, Julián Grimau, Antonio Amat, Enrique Ruano' as 'some of our dead', and states that it is 'useless to search in the streets and squares' because the state is still ignoring their memory.³¹⁹ In 1990, another article cites Ruano and Grimau together, and the frame is that of denied memory, of denied truth:

Seven years later, in the winter of 1969, another detainee, Enrique Ruano, was thrown or threw himself from a window onto one of those patios with granite walls and cement floor. Unlike Grimau, Ruano did not survive the fall: from time to time I read his name in a modest commemorative note in the newspaper and I think nobody will ever know who he was, that almost nobody cares why he died.³²⁰

³¹⁵ 'No es descartable, pero no está probado, que algunas movilizaciones de este género descansen sobre estrategias y organizaciones que persiguen objetivos desnudamente desestabilizadores.'

³¹⁶ 'aumentar su proclividad a unirse a cualquier protesta.'

³¹⁷ Gari, M. 1984. Fulgor y muerte del 'Felipe'. *El País*, 26 Apr.

³¹⁸ Matesanz, R. 1987. Sonrojo. *El País*, 15 May.

³¹⁹ Por eso nuestro universo simbólico es una gran pantalla blanca en la que no hemos logrado escribir siquiera algunos de nuestros muertos: Salvador Puig Antich, Julián Grimau, Antonio Amat, Enrique Ruano. Lo que hace inútil su búsqueda en las calles y plazas de los municipios en que es mayoritaria la izquierda española, pues en ellos a los nombres franquistas les han sucedido -cándida coartada- los del santoral. A los demócratas impacientes les queda el recurso de siempre: celebrarlos fuera". Anonymous 1981. La última playa. A Julio Cerón, que no ha vuelto. *El País*, 4 Jul.

³²⁰ 'Siete años después, en el invierno de 1969, otro detenido, Enrique Ruano, fue arrojado o se tiró a uno de aquellos patios con muros de granito y suelo de cemento desnudo. A diferencia de Grimau, Ruano no sobrevivió a la caída: de cuando en cuando leo su nombre en una modesta esquelita conmemorativa que

The story of Enrique Ruano, after more than twenty years of semi-oblivion, became visible in the media again between 1992 and 1996, because of a new trial about his death. The differences among the three newspapers is quite visible: in 1992, when Ruano's family asked for the reopening of the case, *El País* cited the name of the student in 13 articles, while *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* never did; in 1994, with the coincidence of the 25th anniversary of the event and the decision by the Supreme Court to allow a trial, *El País* published 13 articles mentioning Ruano, while *ABC* published 5 and *La Vanguardia* published just 2; in 1996, when the trial actually took place, *El País* mentioned Ruano 9 times, *La Vanguardia* 6 and *ABC* 3.

Among the articles published by *El País* in 1992, six came out on July 14th and one of them was an editorial that was an open challenge, if not to the general narrative of the transition, then surely to the alleged necessity to forget the past in order to keep the peace:

The death of the student Enrique Ruano on 20th January 1969 constitutes one of the most sinister events of Francoism. [...] Twenty-three years later, justice tries to illuminate what it could not do in 1969. [...] Nobody ignores the material difficulties of learning the truth about things that happened 23 years ago. Trying to do so is a right of the relatives of the students that fell in strange circumstances, other than a historical need. Coexistence and even forgiveness cannot be based on lies and manipulation. From this it is clear how important it is for the Spanish society of our own day to reveal the impenetrable mystery that has surrounded, since 20th January 1969, the death of that young anti-Francoist student called Enrique Ruano, the first victim of a then very young generation.³²¹.

publica el periódico y pienso que nadie sabrá quién fue, que a casi nadie le importa saber por qué murió. La memoria española es un campo minado en el que nadie quiere internarse. [...] Por eso es tan extraño pensar que, aún viven muchos de ellos, los testigos, los que firmaron la sentencia, los ejecutores, los que leyeron a la mañana siguiente, mientras bebían un café, la breve noticia del fusilamiento.' Muñoz Molina, A. 1990. La cara del pasado. *El País*, 8 Feb.

³²¹ 'La muerte del estudiante Enrique Ruano el 20 de enero de 1969 constituye uno de los sucesos más siniestros del franquismo. [...] Veintitrés años después, la justicia intenta averiguar lo que no pudo en 1969. La muerte de Enrique Ruano quedó oscurecida por el estado de excepción decretado el 24 de enero de 1969 por el régimen franquista en un intento de impedir que el movimiento contestatario de Mayo del 68 prendiese a este lado de los Pirineos. [...] A nadie se le ocultan las dificultades materiales para conocer la verdad sobre unos hechos ocurridos hace 23 años. Intentarlo es un derecho de los familiares del estudiante fallecido en extrañas circunstancias, además de una exigencia histórica. La convivencia e incluso el perdón no pueden estar basados en la mentira y la manipulación. De ahí la trascendencia que tiene para la sociedad española de nuestros días desvelar el misterio impenetrable que rodea desde el 20 de enero de 1969 la muerte de aquel joven estudiante antifranquista llamado Enrique Ruano, primer caído para una generación entonces muy joven.' Anonymous 1992. Enrique Ruano. *El País*, 14 Jul.

Enrique Ruano, according to this editorial, died ‘en extrañas circunstancias’. But, for the first time, after 23 years, a mainstream newspaper asks for ‘the truth’ and recognises the appropriation of his memory by the left and the student movement, defining him as ‘that young anti-Francoist student’, ‘first victim of a then very young generation’. Furthermore, differently from almost all the previous articles, this piece also partially recognises Ruano's political convictions and belonging: it does not mention the FLP, but, at least, it mentions the *Comisiones Obreras*.

In 1994, *La Vanguardia* published strict and impersonal accounts of the decision of the Supreme Court to allow a trial, while both *ABC* and *El País* commemorated the 25th anniversary of Ruano's death by reporting the official commemoration organised by Gregorio Peces-Barba, then Ruano's professor and now rector of the Universidad Carlos III in Madrid³²². Peces-Barba also wrote an article commemorating Ruano in the conservative newspaper, in which he recognises the fact that ‘bad memory’ has been ‘one of the keys of the political transition’, but calls for an exception in Ruano's case:

But this general principle, that counts for big collective decisions, would be unjust and petty if it became our attitude where people of flesh and blood are concerned and are at the core of an event, where feelings, experiences and sufferings blend, and where we have the feeling that, in the events, some concrete values of justice have come off badly, and we have to make an effort to fix them.³²³

It is an attempt to reconcile the request for truth, justice, and memory about the death of Enrique Ruano with the political, cultural, and judicial architecture of the transition, and it is quite meaningful – given the fact that it is proposed by a man who personifies the transition: in fact, Gregorio Peces-Barba, a jurist, after defending as a lawyer the anti-Francoist detainees during the dictatorship, became the representative of the PSOE in the committee that wrote the Constitution and, in 1982, president of the Congress. But the most interesting part of this article is where the author explains that Enrique Ruano’s friends ‘who shared his ideas and his commitments, now live in the democratic

³²² Anonymous 1994. Homenaje a Enrique Ruano a los 25 años de su muerte cuando estaba detenido. *El País*, 18 Jan.; E., A. 1994. La Universidad Carlos III rinde homenaje a Enrique Ruano en el XXV Aniversario de su muerte. *ABC*, 20 Jan. p.52.

³²³ ‘Pero este principio general, que vale para las grandes decisiones colectivas, sería injusto y mezquino si se convierte en nuestro talante cuando las personas de carne y hueso están concernidas y son el centro de un acontecimiento, donde se mezclan sentimientos, vivencias y sufrimientos y donde tenemos la sensación de que en los hechos han quedado malparados valores concretos de justicia que debemos esforzarnos por reparar.’ Peces-Barba, G. 1994. Enrique Ruano: recordando su vida y su muerte. *ABC*, 20 Jan. p.3.

society'³²⁴ as professionals, entrepreneurs, and politicians, and:

[I]f Enrique had been able to develop that life that was cut off so early, he would be now, like his friends and comrades, a good professional and a good citizen, and we cannot contemplate with haughtiness those years and those behaviours that frustrated many illusions and hopes of young people like Enrique Ruano.³²⁵

The author, who is a man who loved and respected Ruano and is fighting for his memory, is, in a certain sense, asking for forgiveness for the victim. Yes, he was a revolutionary militant, but he was young: look how important and respectable some of his fellow students have become, he could have been like them. There is, still, even in an article written by someone who loved Enrique Ruano and is active in the struggle for giving him justice and commemoration, the implicit concept that radical political activism, even under a fascist regime, is something that needs to be forgiven. Or, at least, it is not compatible with the narrative of the peaceful transition.

Nevertheless, the reopening of the case determined some changes in the public discourse: *El País*, after 25 years of 'extrañas circunstancias', offers an article called 'A "suicide" that nobody believed'³²⁶. This progressive newspaper published a series of commemorative articles, and in these articles the crack in the narrative of the transition created by the reopening of the case becomes wider. This series breaks more than one facet of the memory of the Spanish 1960s. It gives space to one of Ruano's friends and professors, to make an affectionate commemoration that ends up sketching out a passionate picture of the time, made of 'voices, pamphlets, police charges'³²⁷, 'the time, in 1969, in which a comrade and friend Enrique Ruano lived and died'³²⁸. Furthermore, the same article acknowledges the existence of spies and collaborators of the regime, none of which have been punished.³²⁹

³²⁴ 'que compartían sus ideales y su compromiso, hoy viven en la sociedad democrática.' Peces-Barba, G. 1994. Enrique Ruano: recordando su vida y su muerte. *ABC*, 20 Jan. p.3.

³²⁵ 'Si Enrique hubiera podido desarrollar esa vida que se truncó tan pronto, hoy sería como sus amigos y compañeros, un buen profesional y un buen ciudadano, y no podemos contemplar con sosiego aquellos años y aquellas conductas que frustraron tantas ilusiones y tantas esperanzas de gentes jóvenes como Enrique Ruano.' Peces-Barba, G. 1994. Enrique Ruano: recordando su vida y su muerte. *ABC*, 20 Jan. p.3.

³²⁶ Anonymous 1994. Un 'suicidio' que nadie se creyó. *El País*, 14 Jan.

³²⁷ 'voces, panfletos, cargas de la policía.'

³²⁸ 'el periodo que duraría el recién declarado "estado de excepción". Éstos eran los tiempos, en 1969, en que el compañero y amigo Enrique Ruano vivió y murió.' Díaz, E. 1994. Curso del 69. *El País*, 21 Jan.

³²⁹ 'el periodo que duraría el recién declarado "estado de excepción". Éstos eran los tiempos, en 1969,

Less than two weeks later, a letter from a reader was published thanking the author for this moving story, and taking the opportunity to ask for the recognition of the active role of radical political activists in fighting Francoism and paving the way towards democracy³³⁰. Two days later, another article attacked the core of the narrative of the continuity between Francoism and transition, going directly after the narrative of the ‘two Spains’ and stating that ‘sharpening the sword that cuts Spain in two’ is worth the risk in order to get ‘justice’:

The reopening of the trial for the death of Enrique Ruano vindicates two generations, it states the existence of the diverging legitimacies and possibly sharpens the sword that cuts Spain in two. [...] It is a privilege of the living to remember the dead, and often the peace of a good memory is achieved if violence or lies or forced oblivion are taken away, as a rotten shroud, from the tomb, finally peaceful and worthy of being the deathbed of a body that we loved. [...] My generation experienced, in an initially less political register, the Ruano case, and knowing now that time did not obscure in the smoke of its inclemency, murderers and victims, it gives finally meaning to the acts of rage, pain, fear, of that January of 1969. [...] Can the judges be the instrument that makes it so that one of the two Spains does not freeze the hearth of the other, where an ember still burns, under the ashes of such bad memory?³³¹

There is a difference between ‘verdugos y victimas’ (‘perpetrators and victims’), and the state should grant justice for one of the two Spains, hurt by the other one. The memory of Enrique Ruano's death is divisive, it challenges the political, cultural and judicial basis of the transition, but nevertheless it is right that the family seeks justice and that the judges grant it.

The trial would end with the recognition that the hypothesis of the suicide was

en que el compañero y amigo Enrique Ruano vivió y murió.’ Díaz, E. 1994. Curso del 69. *El País*, 21 Jan.

³³⁰ de Miguel Santos, J. A. 1994. Ruano. *El País*, 3 Feb.

³³¹ ‘La reapertura del proceso por la muerte de Enrique Ruano reivindica a dos generaciones, afirma la existencia de dos legitimidades divergentes y posiblemente afila la espada que corta a España en dos. [...] Es privilegio de los vivos recordar a los muertos, y a menudo la paz de una buena memoria se logra si la violencia o la mentira o el olvido forzoso son arrojados -como una mortaja podrida- de la tumba, así al fin sosegada y digna de ser el mortal lecho de un cuerpo que quisimos. [...] Mi generación vivió, en un registro inicialmente menos político, el caso Ruano, y saber ahora que el tiempo no ha fundido en el humo de su inclemencia, a verdugos y víctima también devuelve un sentido a los gestos de ira, de dolor, de miedo, de aquel enero de 1969. [...] ¿Podrán los jueces ser el instrumento. de que a una de las dos Españas no le hiele la otra el corazón, donde un rescoldo aún arde bajo la ceniza de tanta desmemoria?’ Anonymous 1994. Herida. *El País*, 5 Feb.

fabricated, but with the absolution of the three policemen, because the disappearance of a bone from Ruano's body made it impossible to prove that he had been murdered. Nevertheless, those few years brought back the memory of Enrique Ruano in the Spanish public discourse. In 2001, an article in *El País* recognised him among the fathers of Spanish democracy³³², and in 2004 his story was used as a symbol of Franco's repression, using the word 'defenestrado'³³³ where once we would have read 'in extrañas circunstancias'. In 2005 two different articles used the word 'asesinado' ('murdered') in reference to Ruano³³⁴.

In the 2000s, the revived memory of Enrique Ruano followed four main representations. The first one was the narrative of the Spanish 1968, the existence of which was denied until a few years earlier, but that, as I have already shown for the *capuchinada*, found a legitimisation in the public sphere after the normalisation of the Spanish political system. Enrique Ruano became one of the two symbols of the Spanish 1968, together with the famous concert by Raimon³³⁵.

The second one is constituted by the memories of veterans of the FLP, the existence of which was never mentioned for decades, even in the articles on Ruano's death, but which became, in some ways, famous – pushing the veterans to come out of the closet³³⁶.

The third one is the martyrology: Ruano enters, together with Grimau and others, the list of the victims of Francoism, whose role is increasingly recognised in the struggle for democracy³³⁷. The fourth one is connected to all the others, and it is constituted by the articles that mention Ruano with regard to the debate on the memory of the civil war and of the dictatorship that characterised Spanish politics from 2004 to 2008 (Aguilar 2008: 76-94). These articles were mostly denouncing the 'denied memory'; attacking the PP for its refusal to explicitly denounce Francoism; pieces related to the attempt to investigate Franco's crime by judge Garzon in spite of the Ley de

³³² Serrano, A. 2001. Un abrazo de 25 años. *El País*, 7 Jan.

³³³ Carrillo, M. 2001. El Tribunal Constitucional y la memoria histórica. *El País*, 27 Aug.

³³⁴ Cruz, J. 2005. Este hombre tiene un millón de historias. *El País*, 16 Jan.; Anonymous 2005. El rodaje de 'Salvador' recrea la manifestación contra el asesinato de Ruano. *El País*, 30 Aug.

³³⁵ Ordoñez, M. 2007. Aquel 'Marat-Sade' del 68. *El País*, 3 May; Savater, F. 2008. Un mes y cuarenta años. *El País*, 5 May; Fraguas, R. and Gisbert, P. 2008. Unas horas de libertad en el 68. *El País*, 23 May; Fraguas, R. 2008. Madrid vuelve a corear versos de Raimon. *El País*, 23 May.

³³⁶ Mora, R. 2004. José Ramón Recalde gana el Premio Comillas con sus memorias 'Fe de vida'. *El País*, 3 Sep.; Landaburu, A. 2009. 'Al PNV, tan enfadado, hay que darle unas vacaciones'. *El País*, 13 Apr.

³³⁷ Sauquillo, F. et al. 2004. En memoria de Guillermo Vázquez Álvarez. *El País*, 12 Sep; Geli, C. 2007. La Transición que vino de la calle. *El País*, 18 Nov.

Amnistia³³⁸.

And on January 20th 2009, 40 years after his death, Enrique Ruano was officially commemorated by his university, with the presence of the main characters of this story: his girlfriend, his friends and comrades, and fellow students, some of whom now occupy the highest positions in Spanish politics.

How was he? The quiet look of Dolores González Ruiz shines, looks engrossed for a moment and comes back with a smile of deep affection: ‘He was tender and firm’, she answers sweetly. She refers to her very close friend Enrique Ruano, law student at the University of Madrid, who in the prime of life was thrown out of a window, from the seventh floor of a building in the neighbourhood of Salamanca, by the Francoist police 40 years ago. Eight years later, Dolores would also lose her husband, Javier Sahuquillo, in the massacre of the lawyers of Atocha. The passage of time did not fade his memory, commemorated yesterday with fondness by a thousand people – many of them lawyers or judges – that, called by the rector of the Complutense University, Carlos Berzosa, filled the main hall of the University of San Bernardo. Comrades of Enrique in 1969 in the People's Liberation Front, like Manuel Garí, Jaime Pastor or José María Mohedano – hardly repressing their tears – or his professor, Gregorio Peces-Barba, remembered that honest and enthusiastic young man, that died to defend ‘a revolutionary ideal of emancipation and freedom’. José Manuel G. Benítez, lawyer of Enrique's family, told the hair-raising story of his passion, torture and death, ‘presented by Franco's police as a suicide’. Twenty years later, forensic details of his murder were discovered. María del Mar Bonet sang *Què volen aquesta gent* in his memory, while public figures like José Bono, Javier Rojo, Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba and Mariano Fernández Bermejo remembered, together with Dolores González Ruiz y Margot Ruano, those years of lead and rage, watered by the blood of brave dreamers like her brother Enrique, the 21-year-old student leader.³³⁹

³³⁸ Yañez-Barnuevo, L. 2005. ¡Ay de los vencidos! *El País*, 12 Oct.; Chicote Serna, E. 2006. ‘Salvador’. *El País*, 22 Sep.; Berzosa, C. 2008. El olvido de la crueldad franquista. *El País*, 7 Jan.; Elorza, A. 2009. Víctimas y verdugos. *El País*, 24 Jan.; Altares, P. 2008. Progres apolillados y de pacotilla. *El País*, 11 Dec.

³³⁹ ‘¿Cómo era él? La mirada serena de Dolores González Ruiz refulge, se ensimisma un instante y regresa con una sonrisa de hondo afecto: “Era tierno y firme”, responde dulcemente. Se refiere a su amigo del alma Enrique Ruano, estudiante de Derecho de la Universidad de Madrid, que en la flor de la vida murió defenestrado, desde un séptimo piso del barrio de Salamanca, por la policía franquista hace 40 años. Dolores perdería también, ocho años después, a su esposo, Javier Sahuquillo, en la matanza de los abogados de Atocha. El tiempo transcurrido no ha marchitado su recuerdo, homenajeado ayer con cariño por un millar de personas - muchas de ellas abogados o jueces - que, convocadas por el rector de la Complutense, Carlos Berzosa, llenaban el Paraninfo de la Universidad de San Bernardo. Compañeros de militancia de Enrique en 1969 en el Frente de Liberación Popular, como Manuel Garí, Jaime Pastor o José María Mohedano - en pugna contra el sollozo - o su profesor, Gregorio Peces-Barba, recordaron a aquel joven íntegro y entusiasta, que murió por defender “un ideal revolucionario de emancipación y libertad”. José Manuel G. Benítez, abogado de la familia de Enrique, hizo un relato procesal estremecedor de su pasión, tortura y muerte, “presentadas por la policía de Franco como un suicidio”. Veinte años

In this article, Ruano's memory is completely rehabilitated. There are no more doubts surrounding the circumstances of his death, he is remembered with love and admiration not only by his family and friends, but by a former president of the parliament (Peces-Barba), his current successor (Bono) and even the minister of interior Rubalcaba, the political head of the police forces that killed Ruano and lied about it for decades.

The interaction between the gradual evolution of the narrative of the transition (gradually more open, in time, to recognise the role of activists in the democratisation process), the establishment of a martyrlogy of the victims of Francoism (that Ruano has joined) and the gradual integration of the memory of the Spanish 1960s and 1970s in general and in the depoliticised framework of the global 1968, gradually transformed Enrique Ruano's memory from that of a mentally unbalanced looter to that of a 'tender and firm' 'student leader' who 'died to defend a revolutionary ideal of emancipation and freedom'.

6. Concluding remarks

6.1 Political context, social mobilisation and different narratives

In general, the memory of the student movement of the '60s, at least as far as these two events are concerned, is not frequently linked to contemporary episodes of student protest, or, more in general, of social and political contention. In the memory of the *capuchinada* I have identified different narratives: 'transition and democratisation'; 'student union'; 'generation' and 'the '68-counterculture'. Among these, the 'student union' seems the weakest, and it is the only one connected with some occasions of symbolic appropriation by social movements. But also in Enrique Ruano's case, where there is a phenomenon of symbolic appropriation by the student movement and the left,

después, descubriría pormenores forenses de su asesinato. María del Mar Bonet cantó en su recuerdo *Què volen aquesta gent*, mientras personalidades como José Bono, Javier Rojo, Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba o Mariano Fernández Bermejo recordaban, con Dolores González Ruiz y Margot Ruano, aquellos años de plomo y furia regados por la sangre de soñadores valientes como su hermano Enrique, líder estudiantil de 21 años.' Fraguas, R. 2009. La Complutense homenajea al estudiante Enrique Ruano. Fue defenestrado por la policía franquista en 1969. *El País*, 21 Jan.

it looks like the master frame based on anti-Francoism and transition is stronger, and able to make the political context count more than the social mobilisation, in determining the evolution of the mnemonic representations of these events.

Furthermore, it seems that the transition also has a depoliticising effect on the events, eliminating, until the '90s, every reference to the political groups that were involved.

6.2 Actors: appropriation and possessive memory

The death of Enrico Ruano was immediately appropriated by the student movement and the left (after a short struggle with the right and the government), while the *capuchinada*, at least in the context of mediated public discourse, was appropriated by social actors only 10 years later. This depended on the evolution of censorship, but also on the level of development of the movement in different stages of the wave of mobilisation: the *capuchinada* took place at the beginning of the wave of mobilisation, while Ruano died after three years of intense protest, when the movement had already passed through repression and radicalisation and had gained a place in the public sphere.

In both cases there are examples of possessive memory by veterans, both *strictu sensu*, that are PSUC and FLP militants, and in a wider sense, involving all those who felt part of that experience of mobilisation.

6.3 Democratisation, controversial victims and the *sixty-eight-isation* of Spanish memory

Until the late '90s, neither event was connected in almost any way with the general framework of the global 1968. As I said, the master frame of anti-Francoism and transition was stronger than the international context, with Spanish exceptionalism prevailing over any attempt to connect the *capuchinada* and Ruano's death to what was happening around the world.

Later, after the end of the transition, both symbols came to be associated with 1968, even if to different degrees of intensity: the *capuchinada* was mainly connected with

the narrative of democratisation, while Ruano, having entered the martyrology of the victims of Francoism, also became symbolic of the Spanish 1968.

After the death of Franco and the transition to democracy, both the intrinsic characteristics of the story of Enrique Ruano and its immediate appropriation by the clandestine left and the student movement, during a wave of mobilisation, made it quite difficult to insert it in the narrative of the transition, officially represented as a 'pacted rupture' (Linz 1992), a process of gradual change led by the reformist sector of the Francoist elite under the supervision of the new king (Martín Villa 1985). References to contributions from below to the end of the regime are difficult to find in the Spanish press between 1975 and the electoral victory of the Socialist Party, which put Franco's political heirs in the opposition for the first time, in 1982. But the story of Enrique Ruano was also controversial later, when having participated in anti-Francoist events like the *capuchinada* (the clandestine meeting of students to found a democratic student union alternative to the official one, in a convent in Barcelona) of 1966 becomes a point of honour, something that most politicians are proud to have on their CVs. Not only did Ruano's story draw attention to the excessive use of force on the part of the police, something that is politically sensitive in all political regimes, and was particularly uncomfortable in a country characterised by the strong tensions between continuity and reform, but it was also led by a radical activist, a young revolutionary that looked more similar to those that were still protesting under the new democratic regime than to those who were now in the government. Even if Ruano was, in fact, a victim of the violence of the regime, it was more difficult to represent him as an innocent victim than it would have been for others, not only for his participation in a radical leftist group like the FLP but also for the connection between his death and the following wave of student outrage, in a context that a Spanish historian has described as characterised by the 'genetic fear of protest' (Sánchez Mosquera 2008).

Nevertheless, there is a visible correlation between the gradual acceptance of Enrique Ruano in the canon of the victims of the dictatorship and the progressive sixty-eightisation of the memory of the Spanish student movement, that involves also, as I have already showed, the way in which the story of the *capuchinada* is told. In particular, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of 1968, in 2008, the memory of the student struggles of the '60s and '70s are for the first time completely integrated in the global narrative of 1968. While on previous occasions the press had always stressed the difference between what had happened in Spain and in the rest of the world, looking at

the student movement as the student opposition to Francoism, in a context made exceptional by the presence of the dictatorship, rather than as a local instance of a global phenomenon, now the landscape has completely changed, and Enrique Ruano's death and Raimon's concert at the university become the symbols of the Spanish 1968. This seems to be a quite visible example of the processes of globalisation of memory that the scholarship is starting to address. As Phillips and Reyes have noted, "the dynamics of global forces can be seen as influencing and altering local and national memories and memory practices in ways that will be more intelligible when rendered within a framework of global memory than if understood solely in relation to local and national forces" (Phillips and Reyes 2011:18). Furthermore, 1968 is not a neutral label. To integrate the memory of the Spanish student movement in the global narrative of 1968 means to privilege, also in the Spanish context, the traits that are connected with the global narrative of 1968 nowadays, that is, as Daniel Bensaid wrote, 'a depoliticised and depoliticising reading' of 1968, in which the global student revolt is 'reduced [...] to the anti-authoritarian will and to the modernisation of lifestyle', a cultural reform rather than a political revolution (Bensaid 2008:24). To be clear, I do not share Bensaid's normative stance against the countercultural aspects of 1968, the impact of which on the capacity of innovation of Western societies cannot be overlooked. From my point of view, the interesting point is to observe how the representation of certain events changes in time and how different narratives are used in different times, to fit the same events in different frameworks. I do not argue for the normative superiority of the most politicised representations of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s over the more counterculture-related. Instead, I observe how different representations are used in different context and what effect this choice has.

In a context like the Spanish one, which has never developed its own memory of 1968 due to the strength of the master frame of Francoism and the transition, to integrate the student movement into the framework of the global 1968 means to import a representation of 1968 based more on the American 'summer of love' than on the revolutionary attempts on the part of the European youth. In fact, most of the articles published on the occasion of the 40th anniversary tend to downplay the political aspects of the student struggle and to introduce, in a completely new fashion in the Spanish context, anecdotes connected with cultural innovation, sexual liberation, generational change, lifestyle modernisation, etc.

I am not denying that these elements were part of the actual experience of Spanish 1968:

it is plausible that they were. What I am noticing is that they did not appear in the press for years, and that, when they do, even in a quite marginal way, they partially change the way in which some events, like the *Capuchinada* and the death of Enrique Ruano, are remembered. In this new context, the figure of Enrique Ruano becomes significantly less politically controversial and threatening. Paradoxically, while in a very politicised context, which was hegemonised by the narrative of the transition, a politically charged memory like that of Enrique Ruano did not find a space; instead, it found one in the new depoliticised framework of the Spanish 1968, together with Raimon's concert, as cultural symbols of a generational change. The gradual contextualisation of the representation of the Spanish student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the framework of global 1968, that is still a quite marginal tendency, is the door through which, paying a price in terms of depoliticisation, a part of the memory of those years is slowly entering the mass media forum of the public sphere.

**Part 3 - Memory in action: mnemonic practices,
collective identities and strategic choices in
contemporary student movements**

Chapter 6 - Syntax: the forms of memory

1. Memories, legacies, continuities and rituals. Keeping together macro, meso and micro levels.

In the previous chapters I have primarily used the concept of public memory, which has proved to be a particularly effective tool for defining the field of analysis and avoiding confusion. In fact, limiting my analysis to the public sphere, to the ‘publicly discussed image of the past’, and focusing in particular on mainstream media, I have chosen a particular aspect of the memory of the student movement, and a particular lens through which to look at it. Choosing public memory as the key for the analysis provides some convenient advantages, because it allows the researcher to focus on the macro level and to trace the evolution of the representation of the past over the decades, accounting for the influence of historical breaks and political contexts in the different phases, while maintaining a homogeneous object of analysis.

Things start to get more complicated when the focus of the analysis shifts from media content, interpreted through the conceptual lens of public memory, to the interviews with contemporary activists. Individual accounts, in fact, are naturally complex and prismatic. As I explained in Chapter 3, I decided not to ask the activists directly about memory, but instead to let them tell their story in the context of the university mobilisation, using a series of questions, going from the particular to the general. I then conducted a critical analysis of their accounts, which I consider ‘memory texts’, looking at the role and influence of the past. In this wide framework, the macro level of public memory is not the only past that proves to have some relevance. This is actually one of the main reasons behind this methodological choice: in fact, the assessment of the role of mediated public memory is one of the goals of my research, and there are a multitude of factors to be analysed, in order to evaluate the respective impact of each. Therefore, in the analysis of the individual accounts of the activists, the role of the past in contemporary mobilisation emerges at different levels, and it would be inaccurate and confusing to treat it as a single phenomenon. Some of the aspects that are relevant for this research have been experienced inside the movement, others, even if experienced during a mobilisation phase, refer to the role of external actors and are set in the general context of the public sphere. The concept of public memory, for example, is useful when I am dealing with the activists' knowledge of past mobilisations, or the

comparisons with the past imposed by the media, while the interviewees' accounts on the repetitiveness of the forms of protest can be better analysed by referring to the literature on repertoires of contention, which traditionally has not used the concept of memory but, instead, routine and continuity (Tilly 1986, Tilly and Tarrow 2006) or habitus (Bourdieu 1977). The latter has also been used by Jasper (1997) in relation to the concept of culture, and in particular of movement culture. This link will prove to be useful in this part of the thesis, in particular in order to link individual habitus, at the micro level, with collective movement culture, at the meso level, paving the way to the next step: the analysis of the mechanisms based on the interaction between meso and macro levels, between the collective identity of activists and the challenges proposed by other actors and by the symbolic environment in the public sphere.

In my analysis, the macro level is the public sphere, while individual accounts are set at the micro level and are integrated in the movement's structure and culture, which is at the meso level. In this part of the thesis, I distinguish between phenomena referring to the internal structure and culture of the movement, at the meso level, and phenomena referring to the public sphere. Nevertheless, both my methodological choice of media content analysis and the literature on culture in social movements lead me to make this distinction only in the description of the different aspects of the influence of the past in contemporary mobilisations; whereas I tend to keep together the meso and macro levels, movement culture and public debate, in the analysis and attempts at explanation, given their dialogic and dialectic relationship. As Steinberg argues: '[r]ather than looking for distinct frames or ideologies that challengers pit against dominant frames, or assuming that resistant cultural practices are harboured in a detached subversive subculture, dialogic analysis argues that much contention occurs within a discursive field heavily structured by the dominant genres.' (Steinberg 2002: 213)

In order to address this issue, in this third part of the thesis I will use a typology derived from linguistics, a field in which *syntax* is defined as the study of the relationship of signs with each other (everything that has to do with form), *semantics* is defined the study of the relationship between signs and the realities they refer to (everything that has to do with meaning) and *pragmatics* is the relationship between signs and the human behaviour related to them (everything that has to do with use). Consequently, in this chapter I will discuss the forms of memory, and the different ways in which the representation of the past takes place in contemporary student movements. In Chapter 7 I will describe the representation of the 1960s and 1970s in contemporary movements

and its relationship with public memory; and in Chapter 8 I will address the influence of the past, through memory, on collective action, and in particular on the strategic choices that activists make.

2. Syntax: the forms of memory

The memory of past mobilisations is present in different forms in the individual accounts of contemporary activists. In this chapter I will propose a typology of these forms, with the goal of pointing out the distinct ways in which memory takes on a concrete presence in the context of current mobilisation. In the accounts of student activists, I have identified five different ways of referencing the past: *origin stories and foundation myths* of the collectives involved in the mobilisation, which are often described and identified through the history and trajectory that brought them to where they are; *organisational and material structures remaining from the past*, outcomes of previous mobilisations that remained in the local field of action and are now available for current activists, including physical spaces, departmental collectives, university regulations, etc.; *protest traditions and political connotations of the local field of action*, traits and characteristics assumed by departments, universities and cities because of past mobilisations and that still structure the set of strategic possibilities for contemporary action; *direct comparisons with previous waves of mobilisation*, by the initiative of activists or of other actors; *'classical' repertoires and the textbook of student mobilisation*, a set of ritualised practices and norms that tend to be replicated by activists and are recognised by them as inherited from the past.

2.1 Origin stories and foundation myths

The first and most frequent type of reference to the past that activists made in the interviews was related to the history of the political collectives involved in the mobilisation. When asked to describe the political actors participating in the movement, many activists identify this description with the genealogy of the political collectives, referring to long-lasting political traditions or to a specific wave of student mobilisation as the 'origin story' of the collective.

The quotation below from an activist in Rome is interesting from this point of view,

because, when asked to describe the actors of the university mobilisation, he describes all of them in reference to their history, their past, their origin:

The groups at that time inside the university were Uniriot, a network of post-White Overalls³⁴⁰, let's call them that, then there was the ex-Coordination of the Collectives, that had been in some way the gatherer of the mobilisations of 2005. [...] Then there was Link, which is a group of people who left the UDU³⁴¹ and of other experiences that were created during the Wave. Atenei in Rivolta [...] is the residual of the collectives I was mentioning before, and Unicommon that is the continuation of Uniriot, which had changed name.³⁴²(I1)

This is an extremely common way of describing movement actors, especially in the Italian case. Groups are usually described as 'residuals' of a previously existing network, as 'people that left' some other organisations, as 'coming from' a past wave of mobilisation, as having 'roots' in political traditions of other historical periods. Activists are often 'ex' something and groups are often 'post' something. The differences between the different groups are often explained by referring to the groups' 'history' and 'political cultures'. Italian activists tend to use the phrase 'our history' quite often, to identify the historical itinerary that produced their collective or, more often, their political area, and that still plays a fundamental role in shaping their political choices. The following two excerpts, from interviews with a Paduan and a Neapolitan activist, are a very clear example of something that most Italian interviewees did: they used 'our history' as a way of saying 'our identity':

[W]e, that come from a classical history, which is that of Marxism-Leninism.³⁴³ (I9)

In the assembly there was what was left of the Collective of Humanities, with an M-L³⁴⁴ background, with a history that is very different from ours, there were the comrades of

³⁴⁰ *Tute Bianche*, a social movement network active in Italy between 1994 and 2001, based on a network of post-autonomous social centres, and relevant in particular for the tactical innovations in the repertoire of action of the autonomous milieus in Italy and for its role in the build-up towards the protests against the G8 in Genoa in 2001.

³⁴¹ *Unione degli Universitari*, 'Union of the University Students', Italian student union.

³⁴² 'Le strutture dell'epoca all'interno dell'università erano da una parte Uniriot, rete dei post-tute bianche, chiamiamoli così, dall'altra parte c'era quello che era l'ex Coordinamento dei collettivi, che era stato in qualche modo il collettore delle mobilitazione del 2005. [...] Link che è un pezzo di transfughi dall'Udu più una serie di altre esperienze che dall'Onda si erano create. Atenei in Rivolta [...] è il residuo dei collettivi di cui parlavo prima, e Unicommon che è la prosecuzione di Uniriot che aveva cambiato nome.'

³⁴³ '[N]oi che veniamo da una storia classica che è quella del marxismo-leninismo.'

³⁴⁴ Marxist-Leninist.

Link, [...] there were individual members of Rifondazione³⁴⁵³⁴⁶ (I13)

‘Our history’ is what identifies us, what makes us different from the others, and therefore history is used to explain today's differences, also in respect to everyday choices that the movements have to make, as we will see in particular in Chapter 8. For now, let us simply note that references to the past, and in particular to groups' histories, are ubiquitous, particularly in the Italian context. Here is how an activist in Rome responded when she was asked about the reasons for the differences in the choice of forms of action between the student groups:

The different positions are due to the political cultures that characterise the different groups. Those who come from a history like ours, of student unions, obviously start from the need to represent students, and therefore to worry that the forms of action we used were accessible to everyone, without excluding anyone. While, obviously, in a culture more linked to the Autonomy, forms of action are linked to the need to create an image of conflict, a physical and symbolic expression of strength, of a physical confrontation with the police, a physical reaction to repression. In my opinion there is a cultural component.³⁴⁷(I3)

Activists who have a certain experience, and who are at the end of quite a long cycle of mobilisation, are able to describe the process through which collectives and groups were born, as an outcome of mobilisation, in a crystallisation process. Origin stories are still happening now, groups are born and die, and this history is their biography, their genealogy, and their identity. Groups are movements' outcomes, as well as tools for creating new movements. This is how a Neapolitan activist described the outcome of the Wave of 2008:

Then, in time, paths developed in different directions: at the Spazio di Massa³⁴⁸ only a

³⁴⁵ Rifondazione Comunista, the largest party of the Italian radical left in the 1990s and 2000s.

³⁴⁶ ‘Dentro l’assemblea c’era ciò che restava del collettivo di lettere, di formazione m-l, con una storia anche molto diversa da quella che è la nostra storia, c’erano i compagni di Link, [...], c’erano singoli di Rifondazione.’

³⁴⁷ ‘Le posizioni diverse sono dovute alla cultura politiche che caratterizza le varie anime. Chi viene da una storia come la nostra di sindacato studentesco ovviamente nasce dalla capacità di dover rappresentare gli studenti e quindi preoccuparsi anche del fatto che le pratiche potessero essere quanto più accessibili a tutti, possibilmente non escludenti, ovviamente una cultura più magari legati all'Autonomia le pratiche sono legate alla capacità di creare un'estetica del conflitto, un'espressione fisica e di immaginario della forza, dell'opposizione anche fisica alla polizia, una risposta anche fisica alla repressione, quindi secondo me c'è un dato culturale.’

³⁴⁸ Space occupied inside the Department of Humanities of the ‘Federico II’ University in Naples in

specific collective remained, the Marxist-Leninist component, the most orthodox, while we founded Epimeteo, a collective that later joined the experience of Palayana and then of Dada. Others, in the 'Orientale' University started other groups, for example the M-L people in the Orientale started, from the experience of the movement, the CAU, 'Collettivi Autorganizzati Universitari', while the comrades near to the social centres started the 'Orientale 2.0' together with some of Sinistra Critica³⁴⁹ and other individuals. Thus, from the Wave, when the movement dried, new occupations and organised structures remained, and this is what the Wave left in this city.³⁵⁰ (113)

Groups are different forms that existing histories take in the occasion of specific wave of mobilisation. Mobilisation is the context in which movements are born, transform and die. At the same time, activists tend to represent groups as 'new', or as innovations in the context of their historical genealogy and tradition. In the dialectic relationship between group identities and movement identities, which I will analyse in more detail in Chapter 8, groups are usually represented as the bearers of history, political cultures and consequential factionalism, while individual unpoliticised students are represented as characterised by newness, innovation and a tendency towards unity, thanks to their blissful ignorance.

2.2 Organisational or material structures remaining from the past

The past is also present in the everyday experiences of the activists in a more immediate and concrete way, through the structures of mobilisation they have at their disposal. In this category I identify all the concrete elements that are available to activists that are mobilising in the present and that are in some way connected (through discursive-narrative devices, as I will show later) to the past. These are structures that have been built by activists in past waves of mobilisation and that have survived, providing

2008.'

³⁴⁹ Small Italian Trotskyist party.

³⁵⁰ 'Poi col tempo i percorsi hanno assunto strade differenti: allo spazio di massa è rimasta una collettiva specifica, quello più marxista-leninista, più ortodossa, noi fondammo Epimeteo, un collettivo che poi sarebbe confluito nell'esperienza di Palayana e poi del Dada, altri tipo all'Orientale fondarono altre realtà, per esempio gli m-l dell'Orientale fecero nascere dall'esperienza del movimento i Cau, Collettivi Autorganizzati Universitari, i compagni più vicini ai centri sociali fecero nascere l'Orientale 2.0, insieme ad alcuni di Sinistra Critica e ad altre anime individuali, e quindi dall'Onda, asciugandosi il movimento, rimasero occupazioni nuove e strutture organizzate, [...], e questo è stato quello che ha lasciato l'Onda in questa città.'

contemporary activists with an existing landscape of tools and opportunities that can be used for mobilisation. A typical example of these tools are organisational structures, like the existence of collectives that go on meeting even after the end of the cycle of protests in which they were formed, becoming a resource that following generations of students can access and use. Another very common element is constituted by material resources, typically physical spaces, like the university rooms that are occupied during a wave of protest and later become the meeting point of the collective or, more in general, of anyone involved in activism in the department.

In some cases, like in Naples, political collectives are named after the rooms they occupy ('Aula Flexi, Aula R5' I10). Even when this is not the case, an occupied room, other than obviously providing the concrete place for meeting, and, more importantly, of being identified and recognised by potential activists in the university, becomes much more than a physical space, proving to be a material resource able to transmit and reproduce symbolic meanings and identity, charged with a high level of emotion and history, as an activist of the Collettivo di Lettere e Filosofia in Florence explains:

Our room by now has become a historical relic. When that room was taken, in 1991, during the Pantera³⁵¹, the collective was the strongest group in the department, had won with the largest number of votes, and thus had the right to choose the room. But when celebrating the victory the two representatives of the collective had got drunk, and so they woke up late and could only choose the last remaining room, an under-stairs storage room. But from that moment on, this became a point of honour, they asked us to move many times but we never did. This is the reason for the lack of visibility of the collective, but it is also symbolic. When you enter the room, the image is clear. There are ironic quotes, but there are also the references with which I, as an old militant, identified, and others after me. We didn't have pictures of Stalin, like others did, because it would have annoyed all of us, but we had figures like Ocalan³⁵² or Impastato³⁵³, it is a very wide spectrum, for me it is this breadth of the spectrum that made the collective become like a small family.³⁵⁴ (I8)

³⁵¹ *La Pantera* ("The Pantera") is the label used to define the student mobilisation that characterised Italian universities in 1989-1990, against the university reform proposed by the government. The movement provided also the occasion for a fascinating experiment of oral history by Sandro Portelli and some of his students (Arcidiacono, Battisti, Di Loreto, Martinez, Portelli, and Spandri 1995).

³⁵² Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), detained by the Turkish government since 1999.

³⁵³ Peppino Impastato, young militant of the radical left in Cinisi (small town in Sicily) in the 1970s, killed by the mafia in 1978, recently became, after the release of the biopic *I cento passi* ('One Hundred Steps', 2000), an icon of the anti-mafia struggle in Italy.

³⁵⁴ L'aula nostra ormai è diventata un cimelio storico... Quando è stata presa quell'aula nel '91, la Pantera, comunque il collettivo era il gruppo più forte in facoltà, aveva vinto col massimo dei voti, quindi aveva il diritto di scelta dell'aula, peccato che nel festeggiamento di questa cosa i due rappresentanti si sono

But occupied rooms are not the only geographical setting able to take on a symbolic role in transmitting and reproducing memories and identities and to provide material, organisational and symbolic resources for a mobilisation. A certain configuration of the physical space of a department, produced in a mobilisation context, proves instrumental for the continuity of political activism and turns the physical space into a local field of political action (see the following section). Movements change the spaces they occupy, both from a material and a symbolic point of view. An occupation can restructure the material and symbolic geography of a building, suggesting and producing new functions and new habits, and some of these functions and habits can turn into opportunities and resources for further mobilisation, as a former student of Political Science at the Complutense in Madrid illustrates:

Maintaining symbolic spaces and transmitting a certain culture did not need a student organisation, because the environment, the culture generated by the physical space of the university itself determined it. In our department there were many tables around which people talked, etc., the management wanted to eliminate them, because it was a space of socialisation, and we wanted to defend it, even if knew that there people did not do politics in a strict sense.³⁵⁵ (E8)

This description strongly resonates with that of ‘indigenous space’ used by Francesca Polletta (1999): networks that pre-exist mobilisation, characterised by ‘dense horizontal ties’, not formally oppositional but capable of providing ‘the communication resources, solidarity incentives, and commonality of interests necessary to develop a radical challenge’ (Polletta 1999:11). Universities are not indigenous spaces *in se*, and the student population is not a socialised community characterised by dense horizontal ties

ubriacati e si sono svegliati tardi, quindi gli han dato l'ultima scelta, cioè il sottoscala, che però da là è diventato un punto d'onore, ci hanno chiesto di trasferirci più e più volte ma non è mai stato fatto. Questo è sia causa della non visibilità del collettivo, in un sottoscala nel sotterraneo, però è anche evocativo, quando tu ci entri, le immagini sono chiare. Ci sono anche le scritte goliardiche, però se tu vedi i punti di riferimento ci sono punti di riferimento in cui io vecchio militante mi sono ritrovato ma poi ci si sono ritrovati altri. Cioè non abbiamo una foto di Stalin come qualcun altro, perché avrebbe dato fastidio a tutti, ma abbiamo personaggi anche alla ribalta da poco come Ocalan o come Impastato, è molto più ampio lo spettro, e per me è proprio l'ampiezza dello spettro che fa sì che diventi come una piccola famiglia.’

³⁵⁵ ‘El mantenimiento de los espacios simbólicos, de la cultura se iba transmitiendo sin la necesidad de una organización estudiantil, porque el ambiente, la cultura que generaba el propio espacio físico de la universidad determinaba eso, hasta el extremo de que nuestra facultad teníamos muchas mesas donde la gente hablaba, etc., el decanato quería eliminarlo, porque era un espacio de socialización, y nosotros queríamos defenderlo, aún sabiendo que ahí no se hacía política estrictamente.’

in general, but inside universities the physical and social construction of such spaces is not rare. This has two consequences for the analysis of mnemonic practices: on the one hand, as we will see in the next chapter, these indigenous spaces are part of the ‘movement areas’ in which political continuity is ensured and memory reproduced; on the other hand, and this is relevant to this part of the discussion, university spaces are usually transformed into indigenous spaces through mobilisation. A political event like an occupation can prove to be transformative, both from a physical and a symbolic point of view, in respect to a university space, which from that moment on can be used as an indigenous space and will be charged with the memory of the mobilisation. And, as Polletta argues, the cultural structure of an indigenous space shapes, both as a resource and as a constraint, mobilisation, as much as external political opportunities do. Furthermore, in some cases some specific policy outcome of a previous mobilisation has the same kind of persistence in time and provides contemporary activists with new strategic opportunities. This is the case, for example, of the statutes of the University of Seville, that were changed in the mid '80s as an outcome of a massive student struggle, causing the institutionalisation of student assemblies and strikes. This symbolic and organisational structure, which is now available for contemporary students, is recognised and remembered as the result of a past mobilisation, which is, in this way, impacting on contemporary activism.

In the University of Seville, in the 1980s, there was a very strong student struggle and many rights were conquered, and one of them was that the assembly-based movement was crystallised, was fossilised in the institution. Still now, the student representatives can call assemblies, and the classes have to stop, and the students go to the assembly, discuss what they need to discuss, and the delegates are obliged to report to the student council what was decided. This has been institutionalised, this assembly-based mechanism, through direct democracy.³⁵⁶ E12

This is not only a curious anecdote that activists tell to each other, but it has two real consequences: on the one hand, it keeps alive the memory of the student mobilisation of the mid '80s, which is particularly popular and known among activists in Seville, in

³⁵⁶ ‘En la universidad de Sevilla, en los años 80 se dio una lucha estudiantil muy fuerte y se alcanzaron muchos derechos y uno de ellos era que el movimiento asambleario que había se cristalizó, se fosilizó en la institución. Entonces actualmente las delegaciones de alumnos pueden convocar asambleas, y se paran las clases, los estudiantes van a la asamblea, discuten lo que sea, y el delegado tiene la obligación de lo que se ha decidido llevarlo al consejo de alumnos. Eso está institucionalizado, que sea asambleario, por democracia directa, y tal.’

respect to other cities, precisely because of this heritage that they find in the political field in which they act; on the other hand, it shapes, at least partially, the way in which political participation and mobilisation work at the University of Seville, encouraging the adoption of assembly-based forms of organisation, instead of the association-based forms that are typical of other contexts, as testified by another activist.

Here in Andalucia there is not much of a tradition, unlike in other places, of student associations, because here at the University of Seville something of the struggle of the 1980s remained, and therefore there is this mechanism of assemblies that is quite democratic ³⁵⁷ (E14)

This effect does not work only in terms of political opportunity structures, with the movement adapting its practices to the field in which it acts (in this case, institutionalised and legalised assemblies), but also through a discursive process based on memory: the story of how students at that university were able to achieve such a change in the institutional framework makes this form of organisation particularly strong in symbolic terms, and popular among student activists.

What these different cases have in common is the process of objectification of a past mobilisation in a specific symbolic carrier, which might be a room, a collective, or something else.

In some cases, this phenomenon and the one mentioned in the previous section tend to overlap, in the sense that a political collective is described as something ‘remaining’ from the past:

[T]he Collective of Economics was what remained from the movement of 2005 in an organised way.³⁵⁸ (I1)

But structures remaining from the past are not always resources: they can also be constraints. Certain consolidated ways of doing things, identified by activists as the result of past waves of mobilisation, can hinder contemporary activism:

In Italy, in particular in the student movement, [...] there has always been a very strong

³⁵⁷ ‘Aquí en Andalucia no hay mucha tradición, que en otros sitios sí, de asociaciones estudiantiles, porque también aquí en la Universidad de Sevilla ha quedado lo de la lucha de los 80, pues aquí el mecanismo de las asambleas es bastante democrático.’

³⁵⁸ ‘Il collettivo di economia era un po' quello che era rimasto del movimento del 2005 in maniera organica.’

hegemony of the Autonomy, [...] that has produced the fact that formal organisation was hidden, formal decision-making processes were avoided. In France it is normal to vote in the movement, while in Italy we never did. It was as though organisations did not exist, as though they were not organised Leninists. But this is the way it is, and in 2008 there was almost a fear of declaring to belong to a group.³⁵⁹(I4)

Once again, political groups are represented as the bearer of long-standing traditions that thwart the autonomous development and the capacity of innovation of movements. But also, and this is the most relevant point for the phenomenon I am describing, the current system of relationships between actors and ‘the way things are done’, a consolidated set of unwritten rules regulating the movement’s activity are interpreted as the outcome of a previous mobilisation, in this case the 1970s.

2.3 Protest traditions and political connotations of the local field of action

Another element in which memory is manifested and expressed is the particular connotation of some specific local fields of action, due to their history. Some activists represent their department or their university as having been historically active, contentious, and politicised, and they refer to protest traditions historically linked to their specific field of action. Like in the previous section, also in this case the past is objectified in a landscape that the activists take for granted, in which they position themselves and their choices and actions, which are influenced by the historically determined context. The statements related to local protest traditions are less concrete than those described in the previous section and less narrative and explicit than those cited in the first. Activists do not usually explain from where and when these ‘traditions’ and ‘histories’ come: they are just there, and it feels like they have always been there. For example, the university L’Orientale in Naples or the Autònoma in Barcelona, or the department of Political Science of the Complutense in Madrid are described as

³⁵⁹ ‘Questa cosa la dobbiamo leggere storicamente: in Italia, soprattutto nei movimenti studenteschi, perché poi il movimento operaio è un'altra cosa, c'è da sempre, dagli anni '70, una fortissima egemonia dell'Autonomia. [...] E quindi un'egemonia dell'Autonomia ha prodotto il fatto che in qualche modo si nascondesse l'organizzazione formale, si evitassero meccanismi decisionali formali, anche, nel movimento, in Francia è normale votare nelle assemblee, in Italia non si è mai votato nelle assemblee. Come se le organizzazioni non esistessero, come se loro non fossero leninisti organizzati, però di fatto ci portiamo dietro questo portato ed è vero, nel 2008 c'era quasi il timore di dichiararsi appartenere a una struttura.’

traditional hubs of politicisation and mobilisation, throughout history:

The Orientale is historically the university... How can I say it, when the movement mobilises in Naples, the Orientale mobilises. Thus it is historically the one that determines, in the hierarchy of struggles, always a different level of quality, also due to this historical legacy. [...] The Orientale is the university of the comrades: it was where Pantera was, where 1968 was done, where the no-global movements started, when there was the war in Afghanistan the occupied university was the Orientale. It is the place in which you go to study if you are in some way leftist. This is the square in which the comrades meet at night. [...] The Oriental is a different university, it was, it still is in some way. There are some teachers that are more open towards certain things. [...] When the Oriental moves, you understand that something big is happening, or anyway the others wait for the Oriental to start, as a sign. [...] To speak with a student in Palazzo Giusso is something, there are languages that are understood, doing it elsewhere is completely different.³⁶⁰ (I11)

The most active university in Barcelona was the Autònoma, because of its history, since the anti-Francoist struggle.³⁶¹ (E17)

How could you stay in a university like mine, which was the department of economics and politics during Francoism, and comes out in all the history books, with the police, Franco's guards charging with horses against the students, how could you not do something? Here there is the weight of a certain anti-Francoist heritage: the big concert by Raimon, which was the first time someone sang in Catalan, was held in this department. There are pictures in the offices, everybody can see it.[...] I remember that in all the other departments the student card was a bank credit card. But in my department, the management was not able to force it on us, and we still had a paper card. It was something very symbolic. We maintained a self-managed candy stand, the proceeds of which went to fund the assemblies, something totally illegal, that came from 1986-1987.³⁶²E8

³⁶⁰ 'L'Orientale è storicamente l'università... diciamo, come posso dire, quando si muove il movimento a Napoli si muove l'Orientale, quindi è storicamente quella che determina anche nella gerarchia delle lotte un livello sempre di qualità diverso, anche un po' per il portato storico. [...] L'Orientale è l'università dei compagni: qua si è fatto il la Pantera, qua son'68, qua è partita o partiti i movimenti noglobal, quando c'è stata la guerra in Afghanistan l'università occupata è stata l'Orientale, è il posto in cui mediamente se sei di sinistra vai all'università là, questa è la piazza della movida dei compagni. [...] L'Orientale è un'università diversa, lo era, lo è ancora un po' oggi, in cui ci sono ancora una serie di docenti più aperti a certi echi. [...] quando si muove l'Orientale, capisci che si sta muovendo qualcosa di grosso, oppure semplicemente gli altri si aspettano che quelli si muovano, è un segnale anche in questo senso qua. [...] Parlare a Palazzo Giusso con uno studente è una cosa, ci sono dei linguaggi che vengono compresi, farlo da un'altra parte è completamente diverso.'

³⁶¹ 'La universidad mas activa, en Barcelona, es la Autònoma, para su historia, desde la lucha antifranquista.'

³⁶² 'Como vas a estar en una facultad como la mia que era la facultad de economia y políticas durante el franquismo, sale en todos los libros de historia, con los policías, grises de Franco cargando con caballos contra los estudiantes, como no ibas a hacer algo? Ahí pesaba mucho cierta herencia antifranquista: el

This form of memory tends to overlap with the one described in the previous section, especially when the references to a certain tradition of politicisation in a certain university or department have more to do with the persistence of certain structures, like an organised collective or assembly, with its own room, banner, etc., than with a political climate symbolically derived from a mythical past. This is the case, for example, of two departments of physics, one at the University of Barcelona and one at the University of Turin. Here is a witness of the latter:

There is this myth that comes from the so-called ‘shroud’³⁶³, which is a banner we inherited from prehistory, which reads ‘Collective of Science Students’, probably coming even from the 1970s, because it is sewn, and made in a different way from those we make today, and thus we assume it's was created in a different age... Then there is the E room, occupied, handled by the students, and there is everything: the banner, etc., available for anyone who wants to mobilise.³⁶⁴ (I18)

In this category I also include references to the political connotation of the city as a field of action. These statements tend to represent a less homogeneous and more complex setting than a traditionally politicised university or department, focusing on the traditional political traits of the city in which the activists live and act. Every activist tends to represent his or her city as unique, as characterised by a peculiar and contentious history that in some way has an impact on the present, making contemporary collective action more difficult than in other places. Similar models seem to be repeated in different cities (for example, activists in Pisa and Turin describe a similar context of never-ending struggle between a very moderate institutional left and

gran concierto de Raimon que es la primera vez que se canta en catalán, se hace en esa facultad. En el propio decanato tenía esas fotos, todo el mundo la podía ver. [...] Yo recuerdo que en todas las facultades el carnet de estudiante era una tarjeta de crédito del banco, en mi facultad el decanato no había podido meter eso y seguíamos con un carnet de cartón. Era algo muy simbólico, pero marcaba. En mi facultad y en la facultad de política, que en ese momento eramos las mas politizadas, manteníamos un posto de chuchería autogestionado que el dinero iba para pagar las asambleas, algo totalmente ilegal. Algo que viene del 86-87.’

³⁶³ This is a pun inspired by the ‘Turin Shroud’, the length of linen, kept in the cathedral of Turin, that is believed to have been the burial shroud of Jesus Christ, since it shows the silhouette of a man impressed onto the cloth.

³⁶⁴ ‘C’è questo mito di scienze che viene dalla cosiddetta sindone, che è uno striscione che abbiamo ereditato dalla preistoria, con scritto ‘collettivo studenti di scienze’, probabilmente potrebbe addirittura degli anni ’70, perché è cucito, fatto diverso da come facciamo noi oggi, e quindi si suppone sia fatto in un’epoca in cui... Poi c’è l’aula E, occupata, affidata agli studenti, e lì c’è tutto, lo striscione, ecc., a disposizione ovviamente di chi si vuole mobilitare.’

a very radical movement left, in which there is no place for middle-ground alternatives), and the reference to the '70s is quasi-ubiquitous.

This type of reference to the past is also typical of the two-sided attitude of many activists towards the contentious past that characterises their local field of action: on the one hand it is a resource, because people living in a particular context are considered easier to mobilise than others; on the other hand, activists feel the weight of the past, in the form of crystallised models that might not fit the reality of contemporary waves of mobilisation.

2.4 Comparisons between waves of mobilisation

Even before I explicitly asked the activists to mention previous episodes of student mobilisation, some of them spontaneously mentioned past waves of collective action as a term of comparison with the one that they have been participating in. A typical example is the reference, made by various activists, to something happening in Italy during the autumn of 2008 as being the largest demonstration/assembly, etc. 'since the time of the Pantera' (I20) or, in Spain, referring to the autumn of 2006, 'since the times of the LOU' (E9).

Other references are generally related to '68 or to the '70s, but there is nevertheless a recurring habit among activists to compare their current experience in the student movement to previous 'historical' waves of mobilisation. Even when they are telling the story of the beginning of a new wave of mobilisation, the story of something new happening, Italian activists tend to cite examples of the past, to think about the last time that something like that happened before that moment:

We were sticking up posters around the city, our classical stuff of the social centre, we went to the entrance of the Liviano³⁶⁵ and we found it completely covered in A4 fliers that someone had printed on their computer. This gave us the impression: 'we're in front of a new thing, of a real movement', something I had never seen, that nobody had ever seen, maybe only those of the Pantera in their time.³⁶⁶ (I9)

³⁶⁵ Seat of the department of humanities.

³⁶⁶ 'Noi stavamo attaccinando le nostre robe classiche del centro sociale, passiamo davanti al Liviano e lo troviamo tappezzato di volantini A4 stampati al computer. Questo ci dava l'impressione: "stiamo di fronte a una roba nuova, a un movimento vero, a una roba che io non avevo mai visto, che nessuno aveva mai visto, credo soltanto quelli della Pantera all'epoca.'

The reference to the past in this case seems to be the expression of a tendency to historicisation: when telling the story of a moment that they consider historical, the beginning of something that changed the course of events, destined to be remembered, and to which they are proud to have participated (we will come back to pride, in Chapter 8), some Italian activists tend to compare it to the past in order to historicise it, to associate it with a precedent whose ‘historical’ nature is indubitable. If something happens that has not happened since a historical event, then we are living a historical event. In the act of remembering their own, even recent, experiences, activists tend to establish symbolic associations with the past when they want to historicise their experience. They do so in order to dignify it, and to build a narrative that measures up to the canonised stories of previous waves of mobilisation. The symbolic association with a canonised past seems to be instrumental in creating, *ex post*, a narrative of historicity for an episode of mobilisation. This mechanism has interesting connotations for the ‘cultural politics of eventing’, a context in which the resonance of a story with ‘cultural resources already present in the relevant audience’ (Jackson 2006: 502) has already been noted. However, the mechanism I am analysing is not simply based on the resonance of current events with traditions coming from the past, but also and in particular on a recognisable act of mnemonic work: the construction of the story of the beginning of a wave of mobilisation (the peculiarity of which has been interestingly analysed by Francesca Polletta, 2006), with the appropriation of a memory of the past available in the mnemonic repertoire of a certain audience and the symbolic association between the two stories, in the attempt to give to the more recent the legitimacy derived by the canonisation of the older.

As we will see in the next chapter, the memories to which Italian activists refer are part of a quite recognisable canon, based on three stages: ‘68, ‘77, and Pantera.

The reference is more vague in the Spanish case. There, activists tend to generically refer to the ‘student opposition to Francoism’. Furthermore, spontaneous and explicit comparisons with past waves of mobilisation are rather rare in the Spanish context, in which the most common points of reference seem to be distant in space and not in time: among Spanish activists, France and Italy, in particular, take the place that among Italian activists is occupied by 1968 and 1977.

2.5 ‘Classical’ repertoires and the textbook of student mobilisation

Activists, in general, often tend to refer to the student movement as something that always works in the same way, following consolidated canons and routines, and they use expressions such as ‘like all the movements’ and ‘always’. Interviews with activists provide plenty of examples of this trend, the most clear of which are probably those made by activists in Madrid and Barcelona about the routinised nature of the itinerary of student demonstrations:

We repeat things that have always been done: the demonstration, the *manifestodromo*³⁶⁷ of Madrid³⁶⁸ (E6)

Plaza de la universidad, at noon, that is the typical call.³⁶⁹ (E16)

The very classical format of the demonstration: we all start from Plaza Universidad at 12, this will never change, and we did the typical itinerary, you clashed with the *mossos*³⁷⁰ in the Rambla and the typical itinerary was to end in front of the governmental building, and there more or less in clashes.³⁷¹ (E18)

This canon of consolidated routine is something to which most interviewees tend to refer in particular with reference to the repertoire of action. Forms of protest are described as something that has always been there, something ‘classical’, something ‘that already existed’, ‘that is done’, ‘ritual’, ‘nobody asks if and how to do it’

Ci sono delle forme che sono storicamente acquisite. Queste forme le abbiamo acquisite dalla storia dei movimenti. I4

The routine nature of the forms of protest has been well acknowledged by the scholarship. In fact, Tilly and Tarrow defined repertoires of contention as ‘claims making routines’ (Tilly and Tarrow 2006: 16). The concept of a repertoire of contention

³⁶⁷ This is a pun based on *autodromo* (racetrack) and *manifestación* (demonstration), to define the typical itinerary of demonstrations, that ends up becoming similar to a racetrack.

³⁶⁸ ‘Repetimos cosas que se han hecho siempre, la manifestación, el manifestodromo madrileño.’

³⁶⁹ ‘Plaza de la universidad, 12 de la mañana, esta es la convocatoria estrella.’

³⁷⁰ Catalan police forces.

³⁷¹ ‘El formato muy clásico de manifestación: todos salimos de plaza universidad a las 12, eso no va a cambiar nunca en la vida, y se hacia el típico recorrido, te tirabas de cabezas con los mossos en la rambla y el típico recorrido era terminar en la delegación de gobierno español, y ahí había mas o menos confrontaciones.’

is based on the idea of continuity, of a limited set of forms of protest from which people draw when they engage in collective action: 'people tend to act within known limits, to innovate at the margins of the existing forms, and to miss many opportunities available to them in principle. That constraint results in part from the advantages of familiarity, partly from the investment of second and third parties in the established forms of collective action' (Tilly 1986: 390). The 'advantage of familiarity' has much to do to the object of my analysis: student activists tend to use specific tactics (or, at least, they think they do, and they say that they do in the interviews) because they recognise them as familiar in some way, even if they feel the need to innovate as much as they can, in 'paradoxical combination of ritual and flexibility' (Tilly 1986: 33). 'In any society, groups use a surprisingly small number of tactics to pursue their collective ends' (Jasper 1997: 236).

But how does a tactic, a form of protest, an element of the repertoire of contention, become familiar to a specific group of activists? 'Why do they [protesters] have the repertory of possible tactics that they do? Of all conceivable forms of protest, why are only certain ones used, or even considered, at a particular point in history for a given society?' (Jasper 1997: 234). Tilly and Tarrow (2006: 21-23) described how extraordinary events and incremental evolutions force repertoires to change, while the continuity tends to be taken for granted by most scholars. This persistence of old repertoires, that activists take for granted and consider 'classical', recalls Bourdieu's notion of habitus: 'a system of lasting, transposable dispositions, which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems, and thanks to the unceasing corrections of the results obtained, dialectically produced by those results' (Bourdieu 1977: 83). Nevertheless, this concept, even if Bourdieu focuses on its social construction, is deeply rooted in the micro level of individual cognition, linked to primary education and family origin, while for the purposes of this research the concept of 'movement culture' (Jasper 1997), situated at the meso level (Staggenborg 2002) looks more useful. The literature on this topic tend to focus on 'prior activism' (Jasper 1997: 196), arguing that 'initial socialization into protest can, like memorable events, leave a lasting symbolic imprint' (Jasper 1997: 239), after which 'a taste in tactics persists partly because it shapes one's sense of self' (Jasper 1997: 246), but from this point of view the student movement is a very peculiar case,

given that it is often the first political experience for activists. Some interviewees have proposed their own interpretation of this continuity in the repertoire of action of the student movement, linking it with the structural characteristics of student life and of the physical space of the university, partially confirming a structural explanation already proposed by the literature (Tilly 1978: 156). But movement culture seems also to play a role, as also hypothesised by the scholarship: '[m]ovement allegiance depends on personal accounts, which concretely clarify that extended effort is worthwhile and that others have similar experiences and feelings. Central group members are expected to have a stock of personal experience narratives that they can share with colleagues. These narratives constitute the informal history of the group: memory is stored through the set of stories' (Fine 1995: 134-235).

In fact, as we will see in the next chapter, some activists identify this 'set of stories', in particular those told inside SMOs, inside the different groups which, in both the Italian and the Spanish case, structure the student movement coalitions, as the main channel of transmission of movement memory in general, and, in particular, of the continuity of the repertoire of action.

3. The forms of memory

In this chapter I have identified and grouped into different categories the forms that memory takes in collective action and through which it presents itself to activists. What I have proposed is a phenomenical typology not a theoretical one: it is based on the appearance that memory takes in the activists' own experiences, not on pre-determined analytical differences or shared traits. The object of this chapter is the most superficial presence of memory in collective action: its perception by the actors of mobilisation. In the next two chapters I will dig deeper and try to describe the processes that lie behind this appearance. Nevertheless, some considerations can already be proposed on the basis of what I have presented in this chapter.

The most visible element of this typology is the diversity that characterises the presence of memory in collective action. Memory in mobilisation is not a single and recognisable element, but a concept that interweaves a wide set of diverse phenomena, characterised by different levels of formalisation, consciousness, discursivity and materiality. Memory appears as an evident appropriation or rejection of a precise event but also as an implicit reference to a generic past, or even as a repertoire of practices that are

embedded in the experience of student activism. In particular, I have presented cases of explicit references to the past and cases of implicit assumptions of inherited symbolic elements: in Chapter 9 we will see how implicit and explicit memories impact differently on mobilisation. In the same chapter I will also address another element that emerges clearly from this analysis: the strict connection between memory and collective identity in social movements, and in particular the genealogical definition of identity and its outcomes in action.

Furthermore, the phenomenical nature of this typology affects its capacity to render the dynamism of mnemonic transmission: in fact, in this chapter, we have seen memory as it directly appears in current activism, but we know very little about the underlying processes that produced this outcome and, in particular, to the actors that were responsible for it. The next chapter aims mainly to answer this question: how did memories come to present themselves to activists in these forms? I will attempt to address this issue by focusing on the accounts of the activists themselves and on their relationship with the media analysis that I conducted in the previous chapters.

Chapter 7 - Semantics: the competing narratives of student movement memories

In the previous chapter, I described the different ways in which memory appears in current student activism. Now I shift the focus of my analysis towards the dynamics that generate those forms. From the syntax of memory I move on to its semantics, that is, its relationship with the past to which it refers.

In doing so, my goal is to shed some light on the process of constructing collective memories. The general idea that informs this chapter, and which is confirmed by the analysis of the empirical material, is a pluralistic and contentious conceptualisation of memory. In line with the development of the sociological scholarship on memory (see Chapter 2 for a review of the literature), I refer to memory as a set of products and practices, intrinsically social and mainly situated in the public sphere.

Furthermore, I claim an active role of social actors (in this case, of social movements) in mnemonic processes. Not only, as we will see in the next chapter, do activists use memory – consciously or unconsciously – in collective action, but the way in which they access memory is also far from being passive: memory is the past as it is produced in the present, through specific social practices; and social actors carry out such practices in their own way. There are dominant narratives of the past, reproduced in a public sphere that is structured by certain power relations, but the way in which activists access them and reproduce them is far from automatic. As I will explain through the analysis of the empirical material, the memory of past student movements that current activists possess and reproduce is deeply influenced by the narratives represented in the mainstream media, but with significant exceptions – which imply the existence of alternative memories, reproduced through different channels and in different discursive spheres.

Moreover, the relationship between dominant and alternative memories is not easily reducible to a traditional dual model based on the conflict between a state-imposed national memory and a resisting popular memory: activists (as well as other social actors) participate in different discursive spheres and have access to different representations of the past, which together constitute a multi-layered repertoire of practices and products referring to the past from which activists can draw. Thus, the same activists might reproduce a representation of the 1960s taken from mainstream

newspapers, for example, and a narrative of the mobilisations of the 1990s deriving from movement-produced stories and legacies. Movement actors play an active role both in constructing memory and in using it in the context of collective action. This chapter will focus on the former process, while the next chapter will be dedicated to the latter.

The process of constructing memory is characterised by an intrinsic duality: memory is the act of remembering and what we remember, it is a process and it is a thing, it is a set of practices and a set of materials that are reproduced in these practices. This dual nature of mnemonic processes has been aptly summarised by Jeffrey Olick:

[U]pon closer examination, collective memory really refers to a wide variety of *mnemonic products and practices*, often quite different from one another. The former (products) include stories, rituals, books, statues, presentations, speeches, images, pictures, records, historical studies, surveys, etc.; the latter (practices) include reminiscence, recall, representation, commemoration, celebration, regret, renunciation, disavowal, denial, rationalization, excuse, acknowledgment, and many others. Mnemonic practices—though occurring in an infinity of contexts and through a shifting multiplicity of media—are always simultaneously individual and social. And no matter how concrete mnemonic products may be, they gain their reality only by being used, interpreted, and reproduced or changed. (Olick 2008: 158)

In the construction of memory there is an active element and a passive one. Actors give life to mnemonic practices and they access existing mnemonic material: actors are the protagonists of certain activities (mnemonic practices) and draw on existing symbols coming from the past, the production of which is not their work (mnemonic material). I refer to the active element of mnemonic processes through the concept of a *repertoire of memory* (as a set of mnemonic practices) and the passive one through the concept of a *repository of memory* (as a set of mnemonic products). On the one hand, actors produce their own relationship with the past; on the other hand they do so accessing ‘the structure of available pasts’ (Schudson 1989: 108).

In order to reconstruct the dynamics of these repertoires and their relationship with these repositories, I will start, in the second section of this chapter, by reconstructing the representation of the past that emerges from the activists' accounts, and, in the third section, by comparing it with the representations of the past that emerged from the media analysis conducted in the previous chapters. This comparison produces some

interesting elements: the differently formalised and established canons in the two national contexts, the presence of group-specific and city-specific narratives, the different degrees of resistance of alternative memories in respect to the representations reproduced in the mainstream media.

In the sections 4, 5 and 6, I will try to shed light on these elements, focusing in particular on the relationship between two different repositories (the mainstream public sphere and movement culture), and analysing in particular two aspects: the quick and frequent turnover of student activism and the role of movement areas as mnemonic communities. I argue that activists, participating in different discursive spheres, have access to different repositories of memories and address them through different repertoires of memory. Factors such as distance, organisational continuity, institutional means of mnemonic agency and relative position in the field all influence the degree to which activists can access different repositories, producing different levels of resistance of alternative memories in respect to the representations of the past reproduced in the mainstream media.

Before starting the analysis of the interviews, it is important, for the sake of clarity, to briefly summarise the main empirical issues that emerge from such analysis and the theoretical framework that will be used to approach them. The next section will be dedicated to this purpose: it will not exhaustively resolve the theoretical arguments on these issues, instead this will be articulated in more detail directly in reference to the discussion of the activists' interviews. I will sketch a picture of the two main puzzles that we will meet in the analysis of the empirical material and on the concepts that I will use to try to disentangle them. First, I will focus on the analogies and differences between media representations and activists' accounts, suggesting, as a possible explanation, the presence of alternative memories, competing repositories that provide activists with different representations of the past, and the prevalence of some over others that is influenced by different factors; then, I will direct my attention to the nature of these alternative memories, on the factors that allow their survival in a context characterised by lack of formal organisations and frequent turnover and on their relationship with the repository of public memory. On both points I will briefly describe the puzzle and propose a conceptual framework in the context of the existing scholarship. Then, from section 2 on, I will move on to the analysis of the empirical material based on such frameworks.

1.1 Competing memories

Why do we find both analogies and differences between the media representations and the activists' accounts?

In fact, the analysis of the representation of past student movements in the interviews with current activists, in comparison with the representation of the past reproduced by the media, brings results that are as contradictory as they are interesting.

On the one hand, there is an undeniable correspondence between some fundamental elements of the representations of the 1960s and 1970s that emerged from the media analysis that I have conducted in chapters 4 and 5 and the ones proposed by the activists I interviewed. In Chapter 4 I reconstructed the gradual formation of an established canon in the Italian mediatised public sphere: the narratives of the '*68-counterculture*' and '*68-struggle*', the polarisation of the former around 1968 and the latter around 1977, the filter of the 'years of lead' shaping the representation of social conflict, and a general association between contemporary protests and those of the past. This canon and these elements are also clearly recognisable in the memory texts provided by current student activists. A similar process is visible in the Spanish case: a more vague and undefined representation of the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s, the prevalence of the idea of student mobilisation as a component of the general struggle for democracy against the dictatorship, the filter of the transition conditioning the interpretation of everything that happened before.

This visible correspondence confirms the idea of a relevant role of the media in reproducing public memory and of public memory in shaping individual accounts of the past. The 'image of the past publicly discussed' informs the way in which we recall the past. Individuals construct their representation of the past through social practices and within social frameworks, and in contemporary societies the media proves to be a powerful repository of mnemonic material and the participation in the mediatised public sphere proves to be a significant part of the repertoire of mnemonic practices of social actors.

Nevertheless, there are clear exceptions to this relationship. In the interviews with the Spanish activists, there are almost no instances of the process of *sixty-eight-isation* of the memory of the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s that I have observed in the media representations of the last few years. This aspect of public memory does not seem to have significantly influenced activists' memories. Furthermore, the filter of the

transition does not work in the same way for all the Spanish activists, but rather there are group-specific variations, linked to the interpretations of the transition in different political traditions. In the Italian case, group-specific and city-specific memories of some events of the 1960s and 1970s are visible (for instance the peculiar representation of 1977 shared by activists who claim a continuity with the Autonomy), and the memory of the *Pantera* (the wave of student mobilisation that characterised the academic year 1989-1990) is almost entirely group-specific.

These elements suggest the presence of an alternative repository of memory, in competition with the mass media. The media is not the only source of mnemonic material for current activists, and media fruition is not the only mnemonic practice in their repertoire. There are alternative memories that are not reproduced by the mainstream media, but that, nevertheless, exist and persist, shaping to a certain extent the image of the past shared by current activists. The city-specific and group-specific nature of these alternative memories suggests they are situated in the sphere of movement culture. In the next section I will describe the internal articulation of movement culture in terms of its mnemonic role, and in the rest of the chapter I will provide the empirical basis for such analysis, arguing that analogies and differences between media representations of past student movements and activists' accounts can be explained through the competition between different repositories of memories, which can be roughly identified by two general labels: mediatised public memory, on the one hand, and alternative movement culture, on the other. Activists access both mass media produced narratives and representations developed in the context of movement culture, drawing on both repositories for the mnemonic material they use to reconstruct their idea of the past. Media fruition and the various media practices that activists conduct in their experience in the movement form a complex and plural repertoire of memory.

This distinction between the media repository and the movement repository echoes the conceptualisation of public sphere and public discourse developed by Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht in their work on the abortion discourse (2002). According to their definition, 'public discourse is public communication about topics and actors related to either some particular policy domain or to the broader interests and values that are engaged', it includes 'not only information and argumentation but images, metaphors, and other condensing symbols' and it is carried out 'in various forums', including the mass media, parliaments, scientific events, social movements and so on. The public

sphere is ‘the set of all forums’ and the mass media ‘provides a master forum’, because ‘the players in every other forum also use the mass media, either as players or as part of the gallery’. (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht 2002: 9-10). This model seems to correctly apply to the cases investigated in this work: different public discourse forums function as different repositories of memory. When I mention mediatised public memory, I am referring to the component of public memory that is situated in the mass media forum, while alternative memories, or movement culture are situated in social movement forums. Activists participate in different forums, accessing the different representations of the past. This framework is helpful in the attempt to provide a dynamic, plural, and permeable conceptualisation of public memory, in the reciprocal interaction between mass media and movement culture, as we will see in the next section.

1.2 Resisting memories

Where do these alternative memories come from, and how are they reproduced given that there is no formal organisational continuity and the student movement is characterised by a short and frequent turnover?

These alternative memories, as said in the previous sections, are situated in movement culture, which works as an alternative repository in respect to mediatised public memory. But movement culture needs not be treated like a monolithic ‘black box’. Rather, it deserves to be analysed in its temporality, in its internal composition and in its relationship with other repositories.

As far as temporality is concerned, movement culture is *dynamic*, not static; the student movement is characterised by a quick and frequent turnover, meaning that the set of symbolic repositories to which movement activists refer undergo rapid and frequent changes. With regards to its internal composition, movement culture is *plural*, not monolithic; the student movement is characterised by a coalitional nature, that makes the set of symbolic repositories, to which movement activists refer, heterogeneous and depending on factionalism. And, when focusing on the relationship with other repositories, it must be said that movement culture is *permeable*, not isolated; activists who participate in the student movement also participate in the other forums of the public sphere, and they are exposed to different representations of the past, among which includes the ones represented by the mainstream media – which in this way

contaminates movement culture. Furthermore, different activists have different levels of exposure to different repositories: some are more integrated in the movement sphere and more 'protected' from media influence, others do not have any relationship with the movement sphere cultures, and they draw mainly on repertoires provided by the mainstream media.

In sections 4, 5 and 6 I will develop in more detail the implications of these characteristics of movement culture in relation to the empirical material. From the theoretical point of view, two issues need to be pointed out in particular. First, my attempt to examine the relationship between public memory and movement culture in a dynamic and processual way, treating both of them as discursive forums characterised by reciprocal interactions, permeability, and multiple belongings, is part of a broader effort, in memory studies, to go beyond a traditional model characterised by the contrast between a dominant state-controlled memory and a subaltern counter-memory (Olick and Robbins 1998). My analysis, in which both public memory and movement culture are discursive spheres, structured by the power relationships of society but permeable to the agency of different actors, aims to contribute to this development.

Second, in a context characterised by a quick and frequent turnover of activists and by the lack of organisational continuity throughout the timespan between the 1960s and the 2000s, movement culture, in particular in its mnemonic elements, needs to be sustained by structures that ensure cultural continuity and mnemonic socialisation. In this vein, I propose to bridge the literature on social movement continuity with the one on collective memory, identifying movement areas as mnemonic communities. In fact, even if the scholarship on social movements has traditionally tended to focus on waves of visible protest, often overlooking the phases that precede and follow them, there is a literature investigating the structures that ensure cultural continuity between waves of protest. These structures are often based on informal exchanges and are characterised by cultural and individual activities, meaning that they do not fit into the concept of social movement organisation. Concepts like 'abeyance structure' (Taylor 1989), 'social movement community' (Buechler 1990, Staggenborg 1998) and 'movement area' (Melucci 1989) are significantly more useful to understand and explain the role of activism in the 'latency' phases – as Melucci called them (Melucci 1989:70). The structures responsible for political socialisation between different waves of mobilisation, in my analysis, work as 'mnemonic communities' (Zerubavel 1996), as the social groups in which 'mnemonic socialisation' takes place. As Maurice

Halbwachs wrote, referring to memories: ‘the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them’ (Halbwachs 1992: 38). In the following sections I will provide several examples of cases in which movement areas have worked as mnemonic communities, with the goal of contributing to the growing literature on social movement continuity, which aims to go beyond the known event-focused bias of social movement studies and the narratives of newness and spontaneity, and accounts for the historical embeddedness of collective action, the roots of which, particularly in the European contexts, tend to go deep down in the history of long-standing political trajectories, that exist before and after waves of mobilisation.

2. What past do activist refer to?

In the more precise references to past student mobilisations that the interviewees made when answering specific questions, the national context seems to play an unsurprising but undeniable role, with clear differences between Italian and Spanish activists' accounts and some homogeneous traits within the national groups.

In fact, when asked to cite previous episodes of student mobilisation, activists immediately refer to their national context, irrespective of whether it was mentioned in the question or not. Furthermore, the Italian activists tended to follow a quite recognisable canon, built on three precise stages (1968, 1977, and the Pantera), while Spanish activists tended to have less structured and homogeneous references, signalling the lack of an established narrative of representation of the history of the student movement in the public sphere (or spheres) in which they participate.

Italy

The canon of representation of the student movement's past in Italy is aptly synthesised by the brief answer given by a Neapolitan activist when I enquired about their previous experience of student mobilisation:

‘68, ‘77, Pantera. (I12)

This three-stage framework is generally respected by everyone, with some small variations that I will describe later. The homogeneity of the representation, in any case, is coherent with the outcome of the analysis of public memory that I have described in

the previous chapters, and confirms the existence of an established narrative of student contention in the Italian public sphere, which activists engaged in contemporary student politics also refer to almost automatically.

The reference to *'il Sessantotto'* (1968) is generally considered almost banal by activists. In some situations they seem to enjoy the comparison between their own experience and 1968, while in others they find it annoying and misplaced, but nobody questions the fact that, in the Italian public sphere, the term of comparison for every student mobilisation, the archetype of student contention, is always 1968. This centrality of the memory of 1968 in the public sphere, and in particular its nature as an unquestionable archetype and point of reference for any episode of student contention in the public debate is consciously recognised by activists:

The example that comes to my mind is always 1968, because I think that in the history of the student movements it is the most important one, the one from which all the following movements took inspiration.³⁷² (I19)

1968 constitutes in some way the foundation myth of the student movement in Italy.³⁷³ I14

1968 is described in quite a coherent way, above all by the activists who consider it to have nothing in common with their own experience of mobilisation. The most recurrent element is the image of 1968 as a culture-based movement, based in universities but not representing a student movement *strictu sensu*, at least not in the same way that we define contemporary student movements, because it did not focus mainly on student and university matters but on social problems in general – on the struggle against traditional authorities, on innovating society as a whole. Despite being the basic and universal reference for student mobilisation, 1968, once again, is described as a global wave of cultural rebellion built on a generational cleavage, rather than as a student movement:

Well, if we want to start from 1968-1969, let's start from there, in Rome, Valle Giulia and all, everything that was developed inside a movement that broke with some theories, a

³⁷² 'L'esempio che mi viene in mente è sempre il '68, perché credo che nella storia dei movimenti studenteschi sia quello più importante, quello da cui poi tutti i movimenti successivi hanno preso spunto.'

³⁷³ 'Il '68 costituisce in qualche modo il mito fondativo del movimento studentesco in Italia.'

movement that was more cultural than university-based, that posed very strong cultural issues.³⁷⁴ (I1)

It was an occasion of tremendous cultural contamination at the world level. Those were years in which people went beyond the university, the student movement paved the way to the workers' movements of 1969, to anti-war movements, there was a political and cultural climate that transformed society in those years. They were unique years, until now.³⁷⁵ (I3)

I think that the biggest rupture, in respect to some movements of the past, in respect to examples of the stories I've been told about 1968 in Turin, in which the struggle was against the authority of the teacher, with a practice that paradoxically has been resurfacing in the US but not here, of contesting teachers, I remember the story of Guido Viale jumping on a desk and calling the teacher an 'imbecile', that kind of stuff. While, instead, the protests of these years have been mostly based [...] on the perception of a problem like precarity, the perception of an uncertainty, and therefore a protest born much more out of material needs than from some anti-authoritarian or ideological framework, as has been the case in other movements.³⁷⁶ (I14)

There are so many differences... There wasn't, in 2008, a movement of youth rebellion, what caused the mobilisation wasn't the rejection of paternalistic authority, but the rejection of cuts.³⁷⁷ (I18)

As in most of the Italian public memory, in contemporary activists' accounts 1968 is the pole that attracts all the traits that are connected with the '*68-counterculture* narrative, while, as we have seen in the previous chapters and will confirm later, 1977

³⁷⁴ 'Vabbé, se vogliamo partire dal '68-'69 partiamo da lì, a Roma, Valle Giulia ma non solo, tutto quello che si è sviluppato all'interno poi di un movimento che ha rotto con determinate teorie e diciamo così un movimento molto più culturale che universitario, cioè in qualche modo poneva delle questioni culturali fortissime.'

³⁷⁵ 'E poi il fatto di contaminazione culturale impressionante a livello mondiale, sono stati degli anni in cui si è andati oltre l'università, il movimento studentesco ha aperto le porte al movimento dei lavoratori nel '69, ai movimenti contro la guerra, c'era un clima politico-culturale che ha trasformato la società in quegli anni. Sono anni irripetibili fino a oggi.'

³⁷⁶ 'Credo che sia la rottura più grande rispetto ad alcuni movimenti del passato, il fatto che, ad esempio penso a tutte le scene che mi sono state raccontate del '68 a Torino, era molto anche una lotta anti-autoritaria, contro l'autorità del docente, infatti c'era una pratica che paradossalmente è stata ripresa in America ma non da noi, della contestazione del docente, Guido Viale che sale sul tavolo, e dà dell'imbecille al docente, tutte queste cose qua, mentre invece le proteste di questi anni sono state molto più la percezione [...] di un problema che viene percepito che è quello della precarietà, e quindi la percezione di un'incertezza e quindi una protesta che nasce molto di più da alcune esigenze materiali che non da un quadro anti-autoritario o da un quadro più ideologico come sono stati altri movimenti.'

³⁷⁷ 'Ci sono così tante differenze... non c'è stato nel 2008 un moto di ribellione giovanile, quello che ha portato alla mobilitazione non è stato un rifiuto dell'autorità paternalista, come nel '68, è stato il rifiuto dei tagli.'

attracts those that are linked with the '68-*struggle* narrative. Everything that sounds like freedom, joy, flower power, natural rebellion against the parents and sexual liberation is identified with 1968, while everything resonating with political struggle, ideology, radical Marxism and, a step further, sectarianism, violence and terrorism, is identified with 1977.

The polarisation of the cultural-generational aspects of 1968 and of the political and radical aspects, with the connotation of violence, of 1977 is confirmed by the references to '*il Settantasette*' (1977) made by activists, which, when referring to the student movements of the '60s and '70s, generally tend to draw a precise line between different aspects, identifying 1977 as the final step of a gradual process of degeneration of the protest. In fact, interviewees generally associate 1977 with violence, defining it as 'much more violent' than 1968, and with the end stage of a cycle, using words like 'drift', 'failure' (I5), 'exasperation', 'exhaustion' (I4), 'escalation' (I10). There seems to be an established and quasi-formalised story, with a recognisable beginning, a middle and an ending. This story narrates a cycle of protest that started in 1968 with a broad, positive, and innovative movement, and then changed in a process of politicisation and radicalisation and ended in 1977 with the degeneration of the mobilisation into terrorist violence and defeat.

I've heard the comparison with 1977, the fear that we failed in the same way of 1977, thus with a drift in a more conflictual, more violent direction, the demonisation of the movement and all. A comparison born from a fear imposed from outside.³⁷⁸(I5)

I'm much more cautious about the movement of 1977, which, even if like any movement surely has positive and innovative aspects, still represents, in my opinion, the end of a decade, of the cycle of struggles that was born in 1968 and that entered a phase of exhaustion. When a cycle of struggles, and thus also the militants and the organisations become exhausted, and certain analyses are exasperated, because you don't see a way towards victory anymore, then ugly facts like those we know happened.³⁷⁹ (I4)

³⁷⁸ 'Il confronto col passato c'è sempre. [...] Siamo stati accostati: 'è ritornato il '68, ecco gli strascichi del '77, ecc.' Ho sentito fare il confronto col '77, la paura che si fallisse sulla scia di quanto fatto nel '77, quindi una deriva più conflittuale, più violenta, la demonizzazione del movimento e tutto quanto. Un confronto nato da una paura esterna.'

³⁷⁹ 'Sicuramente sono molto più cauto sul movimento del '77, che per quanto come ogni movimento ha degli elementi sicuramente positivi, innovativi, però ha anche manifestato secondo me la fine di un decennio, del ciclo di notte che nasceva col '68 e che era arrivato a esaurimento, e quando un ciclo di lotte e quindi anche i militanti, anche le organizzazioni, arrivano a esaurimento, cioè all'esasperazione di certe analisi, di certe forme, perché di fatto non si individua una via per la vittoria, si producono fatti brutti come quelli che poi conosciamo.' I4.

They have the need to compare and to refer to the movements of the past, but clearly always with a negative connotation. In fact they speak more of 1968 than of 1977, in terms of memory, but then they refer only to the violence, which was what characterised 1977, and surely not 1968.³⁸⁰ (I4)

1968 and 1977 have their differences, because 1968 is remembered as a broad movement, large, peaceful, while 1977 has been much more violent.³⁸¹ (I3)

In the context of this general framework, there are some other references that are group-specific or city-specific. For example, the reference to 1977 has a peculiar connotation for the activists and groups relating to the political tradition of the Autonomy, whose myth is strongly connected with the memory of 1977. An interviewee explicitly said that her idea of 1977 has totally changed in respect to her relationship with the Autonomy: when she was ‘fascinated’ (I19) by the ‘radicality’ (I19) of the Autonomy she considered 1977 as a valid reference, while later she adopted the opposite point of view:

If I think about 1977, I can tell you that my opinion on 1977 has totally changed. When I was younger I would have answered that 1977 was the most effective, or the one to take as a model, because to me it looked like the most radical, the strongest, but now I don’t think in this way anymore. In the groups to which I belonged, the point of reference was much more 1977 than 1968, because of a fascination towards radicality and for some also towards what the Italian Autonomy had been. In extremely general terms, now I believe much more in the Gramscian concept of hegemony or in the educational work that needs to be done, I believe much more in the people becoming conscious.³⁸² (I19)

³⁸⁰ ‘Loro hanno bisogno di confrontare e riecheggiare i movimenti del passato, ma chiaramente sempre in accezione negativa, tant’è che loro in qualche modo parlano più del ‘68 che del ‘77 in termini di memoria, ma poi fanno riferimento solo alla violenza, che è stata caratteristica del ‘77, non certo del ‘68.’

³⁸¹ ‘Sicuramente il ‘68 e il ‘77, perché con le differenze, perché poi il ‘68 viene anche ricordato come un movimento molto largo, collegato anche a un movimento più ampio pacifica, più grande, più ampio, mentre il ‘77 è un movimento anche molto più violento.’

³⁸² ‘Poi se penso al ‘77, ti posso dire che sul movimento del ‘77 la mia opinione è cambiata totalmente, perché quando ero più giovane la pensavo in un modo, ti avrei risposto che il movimento più efficace era stato quello del ‘77, o quello a cui guardare comunque, perché mi sembrava il più radicale, il più forte, oggi non la penso più così. Nei gruppi di cui facevo parte io sicuramente il punto di riferimento era molto più il ‘77 che il ‘68. Per una fascinazione per la radicalità, e in alcune persone anche per quello che era stata l’Autonomia italiana. In termini estremamente generali, ad oggi credo molto di più nel concetto gramsciano di egemonia o nel lavoro educativo che si deve fare, credo molto di più nella presa di coscienza delle persone.’

In the same vein, another activist strictly links the particular relevance he attributes to 1977 to his specific militant education inside the Autonomous area:

From a historical point of view, and nothing more, because I don't consider possible parallels and comparisons, but from a point of view of militant training, I would cite the 1960s and 1970s, the student movement, the newborn Autonomy. Since I have a formation of that kind, I am oriented to see the antagonistic movements of the 1970s.³⁸³ (I15)

Two specific references to 1977 are instead city-specific: the 'Angelo Azzurro' episode in Turin, and the 'Chase of Lama' in Rome. The first event happened on 1st October 1977, where, in Turin, like in many other Italian cities, there was an antifascist demonstration organised by various groups of the revolutionary left, in response to the killing of the communist militant Walter Rossi, who had been shot by militants of the far right during an antifascist rally the day before in Rome, in reaction to the killing of another leftist militant by fascists the day before, in an incredible chain of violence. During the demonstration in Turin, a group of activists attacked a bar that was (wrongly) believed to be a meeting point for the fascist right, throwing Molotov cocktails. A 22-year-old working-class student, Roberto Crescenzo, who was in the bar, did not manage to escape and burned to death. The picture of Crescenzo's stiff charred body, put on a chair in the street while the ambulance arrived, had a huge impact in the public sphere, as testified vividly by this interviewee:

My mother has an extreme anxiety towards anything regarding confrontations in the square, because she is carrying the trauma of the Angelo Azzurro, in Turin... In 1977, in a demonstration, a Molotov cocktail was thrown into a bar in Via Po, where fascists used to go. The bar was evacuated, apart from one man, who was in the toilet and was burned. There is this very famous picture of this man, completely charred, sitting, with this stiff silhouette, in the street waiting for an ambulance. This thing constituted a heavy trauma for a whole generation in Turin, of which my mother, for me, is the highest representative.³⁸⁴ (I14)

³⁸³ 'Da un punto di vista storico, nulla di più, perché non ritengo possibili parallelismi e confronti, però da un punto di vista di formazione militante mi vengono in mente gli anni 60 e 70, il movimento studentesco, le aree dell'Autonomia nascente, io poi avendo una formazione di questo tipo, da un punto di vista storico io posso avere una formazione orientata a vedere quello che sono stati i movimenti antagonisti degli anni '70 soprattutto.'

³⁸⁴ 'Mia madre ha un'ansia estrema su tutto ciò che è il confronto di piazza, perché si trascina dietro il trauma dell'Angelo Azzurro, a Torino... Nel '77 una manifestazione venne lanciata una molotov in un bar di via Po, ritrovo di fascisti, il bar va evacuato, tranne una persona che era in bagno in quel momento e prese fuoco e c'è l'immagine molto famosa di questa persona completamente carbonizzata seduta in

The other city-specific event is the ‘Chase of Lama’, which I have already mentioned in a previous chapter. In this case the references also have a group-specific connotation. In fact, the event is mentioned both by students of the University of Rome, in which it took place, and by activists belonging to student unions:

1977 was, on the one hand, the break between the social and the political, a break that took years to be fixed, and, on the other hand, the apex of the exasperation of radicality in a university mobilisation.³⁸⁵ (I1)

When I think about Lama, I think that in the CGIL there were many comrades, and that closure, that will to signal that we’re on one side and the union is on the other side, I consider it something to avoid.³⁸⁶ (I6)

History, in this university, has a burden. First of all because all the most relevant political actors at the student level are present here. We have them all, thus we obviously have a certain kind of discussion. And then because this is a university that has a history... for example, the intelligent relationship that the movement established with the trade union in 2010 is not to be taken for granted, given that [...] this is the university that chased away Lama.³⁸⁷ (I7)

While the connection between the story of Lama and the University of Rome is immediately understandable, the saliency of this reference to the past for activists belonging to the student union area needs to be contextualised: this particular milieu, in fact, is characterised by a historical relationship with the CGIL, the largest Italian trade union, of which Lama was the secretary general. As it emerged from the analysis of media material, the story of the ‘Chase of Lama’ has been increasingly associated, in the Italian public discourse, with cases of confrontation between movements and

bagno con la sagoma rigida appoggiata per strada in attesa dell'autoambulanza, e questa cosa ha costituito un trauma in tutta una generazione torinese molto forte, di cui mia madre per me è un sommo esponente.’

³⁸⁵ ‘L'altro quello del '77 che invece è stato un po' da una parte la rottura formale tra sociale e politico, una rottura che per essere ricostruita ha dovuto faticare negli anni, e dall'altra parte l'apice massimo dell'esasperazione di radicalità all'interno di una mobilitazione universitaria.’

³⁸⁶ ‘[Q]uando penso a Lama, penso che non è che in Cgil non ci fossero anche molti compagni, quella chiusura, il voler segnalare che da una parte ci sto io e dall'altra ci stai, credo sia una cosa che non va fatta.’

³⁸⁷ ‘La storia dentro questo ateneo ha un peso. Per prima cosa, perché tutte le realtà politiche a livello studentesco più rilevanti a livello nazionale sono tutte presenti. Noi ce le abbiamo tutte, per cui è evidente che il livello di discussione che c'è qui è di un certo tipo. E poi perché questo è un ateneo che ha anche una storia rispetto a... per esempio secondo me nel 2010 non è stato affatto scontato il rapporto intelligente che seppe avere nei confronti del sindacato [...] questo è l'ateneo che ha cacciato Lama, quindi ha un rapporto abbastanza.’

trade unions, and this explains its relevance for people that participate in the student movement and have a relationship with the union.

The memory of the Pantera is also present in many of the interviews, in a somewhat unexpected way if we consider the lack of historiographical and, more importantly, media production on the student mobilisations of 1989 and 1990. There is no major film, novel, or TV series about the Pantera, and the absolute predominance of the memory of the 1960s and 1970s as a reference for all social conflict in the Italian public sphere is unquestionable. This predominance is reflected in the interviews: as I have already said, the references to 1968 are absolutely the most widespread. Nevertheless, the Pantera is ignored far less by student activists than it is by the mainstream media: 15 interviewees out of 20 mentioned it, either in spontaneous comparisons with their own experience, like the ones I have described in the previous chapter, or when answering a specific question about previous waves of student mobilisation in Italy.

There is an element of resistance to public memory with an alternative memory, in this recurrent presence of the Pantera. In order to understand the mechanisms that produce this effect, it can be useful to look at the representations that students give to the mobilisations of 1989 and 1990. What story of the Pantera do they tell? From the analysis of the interviews, it is quite noticeable that the representations of the Pantera are significantly more group-specific than those of the 1960s and 1970s. Apart from the general reference to the mobilisations of 1989 and 1990 as being the last big wave of mobilisation in the Italian universities, which I have already analysed in the previous chapter and is rather transversal to movement areas, all the other representations of the Pantera can be grouped in three different narratives, each one corresponding to the political tradition to which different activists belong.

The first of these representations is the *Pantera-studentism* narrative. Activists belonging to the student union area tend to stress the continuity in terms of content between the Pantera and the most recent mobilisations (the opposition to governmental reforms pushing for the privatisation of universities and commodification of knowledge), defining the mobilisations of 1989 and 1990 as happening ‘in the moment of the fall of the ideologies’ (I6), something that, ‘for the first time’, differently from 1968 and 1977, ‘recognises the existence of the student subject’ and ‘is indissolubly linked with the birth of student unionism in Italy’ (I10). The Pantera is interpreted and represented as the first post-ideological movement, in which students act as students and on university-centred issues, instead of bringing to the university issues, ideologies,

and groups from outside, and therefore is described as the breeding ground of student unionism (that would actually start in 1994), of a new kind of student political participation that they now represent.

The second representation of the mobilisations of 1989 and 1990 appearing in the interviews is the *Pantera-horizontalism* narrative. Activists belonging to the Trotskyist area tend to stress the continuity in terms of organisational practices between the Pantera and their movement experience, underlining the birth, in that context, of ‘student collectives, namely social collectives that were not university branches of political organisations’ (I4), born as a reaction to the competition between the Communist Party and the Autonomy, and characterised by the same ‘horizontalism’ and ‘openness’ (I8) that student collectives belonging to their area are still practising. The source of this narrative is quite easily identifiable in a book, *Gli studenti della Pantera: storia di un movimento rimosso*, written in 1990 by Nando Simeone, a student militant of Democrazia Proletaria (DP) and later a member of Sinistra Critica, the party to which the student Trotskyist area is linked. The book stresses the role of DP as a third force between the PCI and the Autonomy, instrumental in creating and empowering horizontal and open student collectives, and contemporary students belonging to those collectives and to that political area feel the Pantera as their foundation myth, maybe even more than those belonging to the student union area.

Finally, there is the *Pantera-scene* narrative, proposed by activists belonging to the social centre area, in particular in Naples, who tend to stress the role of student mobilisations in 1989 and 1990 in providing the first chance of politicisation to the individuals and collectives who will, starting from there, lead the countercultural and political scene of hip-hop and autonomous social centres of the '90s. As an activist told me, ‘both the posses and the social centres were born from the Pantera, at the end of the day. Officina99 was an occupation born from the collective of humanities. The 99 Posse, which is the most important posse in Naples, was born from the collective of humanities’(I12). In this interpretation, the Pantera was the breeding ground of the whole cultural and political scene of autonomous social centres, to which they now belong.

Three different movement areas propose three different narratives of the Pantera, each of which is clearly group-specific and each of which claims that their political tradition was born in the Pantera. This has two implications for this research. The first one has to do with historical analysis: it is probably true that the Pantera was the first massive

wave of mobilisation after the end of the cycle of protest that started in 1968, a relevant moment of re-socialisation and re-politicisation that was fundamental in shaping most of the leftist political traditions and trajectories of the '90s. The second one has to do with memory: while the memory of the 1960s and 1970s is, apart from some specific cases, rather transversal to political areas, denoting its provenance from a forum of the public sphere to which all the activists share access (the mainstream media), the memory of the Pantera is visibly group-specific, and therefore, from an analytical point of view, it is quite plausible to situate in the movement areas the processes of commemoration that produce it and reproduce it.

Spain

The established canon that I have described for the Italian case does not exist, at least to a similar degree, in the Spanish case. When interviewing contemporary student activists in Spain I found no recognisable narrative representation of the history of the student movement, certainly none so widespread as in the Italian case.

In general, Spanish activists tend to stress the lack of mnemonic capacity of the movement more than their Italian counterparts. Some of them, anyway, have the sufficient experience and knowledge to reconstruct the history of student mobilisation in Spain. Only one interviewee presented a synthetic and complete summary mentioning the different waves of student mobilisation that have some level of relevance in the public sphere :

The anti-Francoist mobilisation is very important, the mobilisation during the political transition, the mobilisation at the end of the 1970s by non-tenured researchers, the mobilisation of 1986 and 1987, that was the biggest, above all in the schools but is also impacted universities, and then, after 1986-1987 there was maybe something in the 1990s on fees.³⁸⁸ (E7)

The other activists, instead, do not refer to an established canon. They do not repeat a crystallised version of the canonical stages of student protest in their national history. This does not mean that they do not draw on a common repository of representations

³⁸⁸ 'Es muy importante la movilización antifranquista, la movilización en la transición política, la movilización que hubo a final de los años 70 con los profesores no numerarios, la movilización de los años 86-87 que fue la más grande que ha habido que fue sobre todo en institutos pero que afectó también la universidad, y luego quizás del 86-87 salvo una cosa que hubo en los 90 sobre temas de tasas.'

of the Spanish student movements, but that this repository does not contain a unifying canon of the history of the student movement, being rather composed by different images and narratives, referring to different periods of contemporary Spanish history. Most references are related to what many activists call ‘the student opposition to Francoism’, while the mentions of a ‘Spanish '68’ are rather less frequent, and some interviewees seem to have a vague knowledge of something happening in the mid-1980s. Almost everyone refers to the protests against the LOU in 2001, in which some of the interviewees had even participated, mostly as school students, or anyway have been exposed to quite directly.

The ‘student opposition to Francoism’ is the main framework of reference for the memory of all the episodes of student contention that happened before 1975. Activists use different definitions to refer to this period (‘student opposition to Francoism’, ‘movements against Franco’, ‘the mobilisation against the Francoist dictatorship’, ‘anti-Francoism’, ‘the struggle against the regime’, ‘the students’ role in the transition’), but the framework is always the struggle against the dictatorship. Activists are not used to referring to the mobilisations that characterised Spanish universities in the '60s and '70s as ‘student movements’, but as part of the bigger struggle against the Francoist dictatorship. As one interviewee summarises: the ‘university is considered one more leg of the anti-regime struggle’. E10

The idea of a ‘Spanish '68’ is strongly dismissed by some of the interviewees, with the consideration that the presence of the Francoist dictatorship made the country and its student mobilisation different from any other, and impossible to fit into the narrative of the global '68. The label of 1968, in the Spanish content, has much more to do with the French context (the promised land for Spanish antifascist intellectuals and militants) than with what was happening in Madrid and Barcelona, which was ‘totally different’:

It is remembered above all as anti-Francoist, everything that happened before 1975 is anti-Francoist, regardless of where it happened. Furthermore, the students had their first big participation in 1956, they were an important actor, above all in Barcelona but also in Madrid, of the struggle against the dictatorship. Then, it is impossible to distinguish [between the student movement and anti-Francoism]. If you speak about 1968, you’re referring to Paris.³⁸⁹ (E16)

³⁸⁹ ‘Se recuerda sobre todo como antifranquista, todo lo que paso antes de 1975 es antifranquista, independientemente de donde pasaba, y ademas porque los estudiantes tuvieron su primera gran participación en 1956 fueron un actor importante, sobre todo en Barcelona, también en Madrid, el la

Here, 1968 is connected to Paris.³⁹⁰ (E15)

There were some events in the university of 1968-revival with a small transmission of memory, but in a totally different context, above all here in Spain, where there was a dictatorship and the student movement was clandestine.³⁹¹ (E7)

Furthermore, the end of the Francoist regime and the political transition is also the main framework of interpretation and representation for the student mobilisation of 1986-1987. In fact, this movement is often defined by activists as the arrival of the wave of democratisation in the university:

It was in the process of democratisation of the structures of the state after the dictatorship and establishment of a new system.³⁹² (E16)

For the student movement, the Spanish transition ends in 1986-1987.³⁹³ (E8)

The role of the transition is known and acknowledged by activists, even if few of them express a high level of reflexivity on the role of the past, and in particular of the transition, in shaping contemporary mobilisation. Nevertheless, some of the oldest, most expert and most politicised among them have developed a problematisation of this issue. For example, when I asked a former student activist in Madrid, with a Marxist-Leninist background, why the most typical form of student mobilisation in Spain is called '*huelga*' ('strike'), with this unexpected hegemony of the trade-union language, he answered:

The classical repertoire comes from the workers' union movement. This is the classical form that the big organisation of the Spanish left, that is the PCE³⁹⁴, in which it trains its

lucha contra la dictadura. Entonces, claro, es casi imposible desligar. Cuando se habla de 1968 se entiende París.'

³⁹⁰ 'Aquí el 68 es vinculado con París.'

³⁹¹ 'Ha habido algunos actos en las facultades como de revival sesantayochista, ahí sí que habido una pequeña transmisión de experiencia, pero en un contexto totalmente diverso, sobre todo aquí en España, que había una dictadura, el movimiento estudiantil estaba en la clandestinidad.'

³⁹² 'Fue en el proceso de democratización de las estructuras del estado después de la dictadura y de replanteamiento de un nuevo sistema.'

³⁹³ 'Para el movimiento estudiantil, la transición española termina en 86-87.'

³⁹⁴ *Partido Comunista de España*, Communist Party of Spain, born in 1921, criminalized by Franco after his victory in the Civil War in 1939, protagonist of the clandestine anti-Francoist movement during the dictatorship and then legalized in 1977 during the political transition.

militants, and that also those that are not its militants but come from the same culture, reproduce in the student movement. The system of assemblies is a reproduction of the Workers' Commissions³⁹⁵, with the myth of the big day of strike, that comes from the strategy of the PCE to bring down Francoism, that was the HNP, the *huelga nacional pacífica*³⁹⁶. This culture of anti-Francoism is transmitted to its grandchildren, those in the *No Bolonia* movement.³⁹⁷ (E10)

There is, in some of the activists, the feeling of a continuity, or at least a heritage, between the old left of the anti-Francoist struggle and contemporary student movements. The same activist uses the Marxist metaphor of the '*viejo topo*' ('old mole', a citation from a passage of Marx's *18th Brumaire* on the immersion and emersion of the revolution through history) when talking about an 'ideological continuity' in the Spanish social movement landscape. A certain pride can be detected in a student of Barcelona when she says that 'en todas las luchas antifranquistas la universidad catalana era un feudo de rojos y de lucha contra el regimen, en los 70 todo el mundo en la universidad era rojo' (E20), claiming an ideological continuity between the left of then and the left of now. But it is a continuity situated in the path of the Spanish left, not in the one of the student movement. When talking about the struggles of the 1960s, activists use expressions like 'al final derivamos todos de sta gente, [...] si hubieramos veido entancones, hubieramos estado en eso' (E2), but always within the framework of the anti-Francoist struggle, not in a continuity based on a comparable experience of student mobilisation. And this ideological continuity is significantly stronger among the activists who belong to movement areas near to the Communist Party, for whom the struggle against the dictatorship is a fundamental symbolic reference.

The narrative of Spanish exceptionalism, of a country that was too busy taking care of serious business, like fighting Francoism, to engage in mobilisation characterised by a 'cultural' nature, is shared by many activists; even if they belong to different political areas and therefore see this phenomenon from different points of view, attributing a

³⁹⁵ *Comisiones Obreras*, communism-inspired trade union, founded in secret in the 1950s.

³⁹⁶ 'Peaceful national strike'.

³⁹⁷ 'El repertorio clásico viene del movimiento sindical obrero. Esta es la forma clásica que la gran organización de la izquierda española, que es el PCE, en la que forma sus militantes, y que los que no son sus militantes, pero vienen de la misma cultura, reproducen el movimiento estudiantil. El sistema de asambleas es una reproducción de las Comisiones Obreras, con el mito de la gran jornada de la huelga, que viene de la estrategia del PCE para derribar el franquismo, que es la HNP, la huelga nacional pacífica. Esta cultura del antifranquismo se transmite a sus nietos que es el movimiento *No Bolonia*.'

different value to the absence of a Spanish 1968 due to the dictatorship. This is quite visible in the two statements that follow. Both of them explicitly mention the transition as the outcome to which the student mobilisations of the 1960s and 1970s tended, and for which the possibility of living the experience of a Spanish 1968 was sacrificed:

Here there was a dictatorship, thus May 1968 arrived, but it could not avoid being something for people from outside, because here we were busy getting the dictator off our backs and starting our own transition.³⁹⁸ (E20)

Here I believe that there was something different, it wasn't the university-based and cultural movement that happened in France, for example, or in Italy with 1977, whereas here we were in the precise moment of the fall of Francoism and of the transition. This was at the core of all the movements.³⁹⁹ (E3)

Two different views of the transition bring to light two different values attributed to the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s: the first activist belongs to the political area nearer to the Communist Party and Izquierda Unida, and therefore, even while criticising the transition for its traits of continuity between the dictatorship and the democracy, sees it nonetheless as a historical moment of liberation and democratisation, and therefore has no problem in accepting that Spaniards were less interested in following the example of Paris of 1968 because they were 'too busy kicking out the dictator'; the second activist belongs to the Trotskyist area, with a strong fascination for Autonomy, and therefore seems quite disappointed when she says that Spain did not undergo anything comparable to what happened in Italy in 1977, something 'cultural', because the transition was keeping the movements busy. These different views, nevertheless, share the narrative of Spanish exceptionalism, of the denial of the existence of a student movement as such in the Spanish 1960s and 1970s and of the political transition as the lens through which everything is seen.

Some activists also have a significant level of reflexivity on this point, recognising the role of the transition in shaping their own memory and the lack of symbolic association

³⁹⁸ 'Aquí había una dictadura, con la cual mayo de 68 aquí llegó se vio pero no dejó de ser algo de gente de fuera, aquí estábamos preocupados con sacarnos de encima el dictador y de comenzar nuestra propia transición.'

³⁹⁹ 'Aquí yo creo que se vivió otro momento, que no era el movimiento universitario, cultural, que se dio en Francia, por ejemplo, o in Italia con el 77, sino que aquí estábamos en el momento precisamente de la caída del franquismo y de la transición... lo que era el centro de todos los movimientos que se movían era eso, la transición, pero vamos.'

between the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s as a lost opportunity for contemporary movements, which do not have, in a democracy, the same level of legitimacy that is given to the movements that acted under the dictatorship:

The political transition had a cultural impact: everything that went beyond the acceptable limits cannot come out, is not told, is deleted. There is no legacy.⁴⁰⁰ (E6)

The *Capuchinada* is remembered, but more by parents than by children, and it is more connected with anti-Francoism. It is kept as a museum piece, because the struggle against Franco was fine, but now it can't happen again, now we're in a different situation.⁴⁰¹ (E15)

The consequence of this lack of symbolic association with the movements of the Spanish past is, sometimes, a visible tendency for xenophilia. I have already cited the common references to France when speaking about 1968, or the widespread fascination for the Italian 1970s, and an activist belonging to the Autonomous area summarised the issue very effectively, putting the xenophilia of Spanish movements in relation to the lack of memory:

We relate more to the Italian or French 1970s than to the Spanish. In the imagination of our political action, we have much more of the Italian or French 1968 than of the real movements of Madrid.⁴⁰² (E6)

3. Discussion

If we compare the representations of the past emerging from the interviews with the activists with those resulting from the media analysis, interesting analogies and differences can be identified. In the Italian case there is a strong correspondence between the two pictures. The media and activists tend to follow the same canonised representation of the '60s and '70s, based on the polarisation around the symbolic years

⁴⁰⁰ 'La transición política ha tenido un impacto cultural: todo que se alejaba de los límites aceptables, no puede salir, no se narra, se elimina. No hay legado.'

⁴⁰¹ 'La capuchinada se recuerda, pero más los padres que los hijos, y más vinculado al antifranquismo. Se tiene como pieza de museo, porque la lucha contra Franco estuvo muy bien, pero eso no toca, ahora es otra cosa.'

⁴⁰² 'Tenemos más relaciones con los 70 italianos o franceses que con los 70 españoles. Tenemos mucho más en nuestro imaginario de nuestra acción política el 68 francés, el 68 italiano y tal que con los movimientos reales de Madrid.'

of 1968 and 1977, the contrast between '68-*counterculture* and '68-*struggle*, and the identification between the latter, political violence, and terrorism. It is not the only representation of the past to which activists refer, as we have partially seen and will analyse in more detail later, but there are frequent and coherent references to the same narrative that predominate in the media.

In the Spanish case, the gradual *sixty-eight-isation* of the public representation of the student movements of the '60s and '70s in the media is not reflected by the interviews. The slow shift from a representation of everything that happened before 1975 as anti-Francoism to a progressive integration into the global narrative of 1968 is not evident in the words of the activists.

Together with the representation of the past coming from the media, other memories are visible in the interviews, both group-specific and city specific. It is quite easy to identify the mediated public sphere as the context in which the, more or less formalised and hegemonic canons of 1968, 1977, and the 'student opposition to Francoism', are developed, transmitted and reproduced. But what about alternative memories? Where do they come from? What is the relationship between these alternative memories and the dominant memory of the 1960s and 1970s?

Traditionally, studies based on conflictual aspects of commemoration and on contested memories have focused on the critique of 'the dominance of national memory over other memories', in respect to counter-memories proposed by 'groups and perspectives excluded from traditional accounts' (Olick and Robbins 1998: 126-127), following the Foucauldian concept of 'counter-memory' and nourishing a rich and fascinating tradition of critical studies, of which oral history is probably the most fruitful instrument. But a model based on the contraposition between two monolithic blocks, on the one hand the official state-controlled memory and on the other hand the resistant alternative popular memory, is not able to reflect the complexity, dynamicity, and reciprocity of the interactions that structure the field of public memory. Some scholars working on popular resistant memories have experimented with a more processual approach, taking into account the reciprocal interpenetrations between dominant memory and popular memory (Olick and Robbins 1998).

Throughout this thesis I have chosen to refer to the concept of public memory instead of official or dominant memory, in order to stress the dynamic and contentious process through which memory is reproduced. Nevertheless, the decision to focus on the mainstream media in the previous chapters denotes the fact that I was interested in

mapping the dominant version of the history of the 1960s and 1970s, acknowledging the fact that the media field is structured by relationships of power – the influence of which is also reflected in the ‘image of the past publicly discussed’. The result of these choices is the fact that the dominant memory I have reconstructed, and the impact of which I am now analysing in the interviews with activists, is not a ‘black box’, but a field within which I have already identified different narratives and evolving landscapes, and in the development of which there is also a recognisable role of the movements. The representations of the past that I have individuated in the analysis of the mainstream media are reproduced in a public sphere forum that is structured by relationships of power that reflect the social structure, and therefore they are not neutral but represent a dominant hegemonic discourse. Nevertheless, I have analysed them in a public sphere forum in which oppositional actors also participate, sometimes playing an active and even determining role, and these interactions need to be accounted for. Similarly, in order to explain the existence of alternative memories, it would be misleading to describe movement culture as a monolithic block, opposed and antagonistic in respect to the dominant culture. Movement culture, in which memories play, as we will see in the next section, a significant role, is more dynamic and contentious than what might emerge from a bipolar model. Movement culture, in the cases I have analysed, needs to be represented in a dynamic, plural, and permeable way, as we have seen in section 1.2. A dynamic, plural and permeable concept of movement culture, able to take into account its evolutions through time, its internal differences, and its permeability to mainstream influences, can help us understand the space in which alternative memories, in respect to the narratives that I have identified in the previous chapters, are reproduced and interact with those narratives, creating a dynamic competition between different repertoires.

In the next sections I will describe different aspects of the relationship between social movement cultures and the past, based on the analysis of the interviews with student activists in Italy and Spain, following these three characteristics of movement culture. In order to account for dynamism, I will analyse the impact of generational turnover on student mobilisation, to account for pluralism I will focus on the role of movement areas and coalitional processes, and to account for permeability I will investigate the reciprocal interactions between alternative and mainstream mnemonic repertoires.

4. ‘We start from scratch every time’: the eternal turnover of the student movement

When I proposed an exercise of reflexivity to the student activists I interviewed, asking whether, in their opinion, there is a continuity between different cycles of student protest, or if every wave of mobilisation starts ‘from scratch’, the responses were complex but always included an affirmative answer to the second option. Even those open to the idea of a cultural, symbolic, and discursive continuity between the movements of the past and their own experience of collective action, at the same time almost unanimously stated that every wave of student mobilisation is a new story starting from square one. The main reason, according to the interviewees, is the quick and frequent turnover that characterises the student movement, an issue already acknowledged, even if scarcely analysed, by the literature (Rootes 1978). As we have already seen, the student movement organises and represents a temporary and transitory condition in people’s life, and a rapid turnover in the availability for political participation is a structural condition of the field of action. This structural condition is not homogenous: for example, the fact that references to the short life span of a student activist in the university are significantly more frequent and more strongly expressed by Spanish activists is probably linked to the shorter period of time that Spanish students spend in universities compared to their Italian colleagues, according to OECD data. But the considerations are nonetheless similar: ‘we start from scratch every time’ (E8). ‘Every four years we have to start from scratch’ (E5). ‘Heritage, memory, they usually die with the students leaving the university. Only the posters remain’. (E8) This structural condition of quick and frequent turnover has some direct implications for the itinerary that student mobilisations follow. Two activists, one in Turin and one in Seville, for example, mention a very similar experience with regard to the debate on anti-Fascism that every student movement has to face:

In the first couple of events in the university, [...] the first thing that needed to be done was to declare the assembly as anti-fascist. A six-assembly-long debate on why we were anti-fascist. The eternal recurrence.⁴⁰³ (E8)

⁴⁰³ ‘En los dos primeros en la universidad, [...] lo primero que había que hacer era declarar antifascista la asamblea. Un debate de seis asambleas sobre porqué éramos antifascistas. El eterno retorno.’

There are some stages through which every student movement has to pass, because its members have not participated in them in previous times. The memory of previous mobilisation seems to be wiped out every few years, when a new cohort of students begin their university career, because ‘there is no reference to a past further away than the short span in which one is studying in the university’ (E7).

The juxtaposition of these considerations and what we have said in the Chapter 6 about the ‘textbook of student mobilisation’ seems paradoxical: on the one hand, there is a set of unwritten rules that every wave of student mobilisation has to follow, and on the other hand every wave of student mobilisation starts from scratch, totally oblivious to what happened before. But these are two sides of the same coin here, as suggested by the Nietzschean metaphor of the ‘eternal recurrence’, used by the Madrid-based activist that I quoted before: it is exactly because of the lack of knowledge of what happened before the current cohort of students started university, that movements are condemned to repeat what others did before them: ‘often we tend to replicate, even in an unconscious way, the mistakes of the past. In fact, movements always end because of the same mistakes that have been repeated for 40 years’ (I1).

The reference to ‘unconscious ways’ of replicating the past is appropriate. In fact, the paradox of the ‘eternal recurrence’ is linked in particular to implicit memories, patterns that are embedded in the development of a wave of student mobilisation. But even implicit memories have to be stored and reproduced somewhere, and, in any case, we have seen in the previous parts of this chapter that student activists do have explicit memories of past mobilisations, stored and reproduced in different ways and forms, as I have described in Chapter 6, and with different influences on collective action, as I will try to explain in Chapter 8. So, why do student activists say that every wave of student mobilisation starts from scratch, without any reference to what happened before?

In order to answer this question, it might be interesting to compare student mobilisations to a well-known comedy film of the '90s. In ‘Groundhog Day’, Bill Murray plays a TV weatherman who, during an assignment to cover the annual Groundhog Day event in a small provincial town, finds himself trapped in a time loop, repeating the same day again and again. Every morning, the protagonist wakes up and it is still February 2. While everybody else is unaware of the time loop, and is therefore condemned to repeat the exact same pattern of actions every day, Bill Murray’s character is able to learn from his mistakes, improve his behaviour, and even have an

impact on the lives of others, because of his knowledge of what happened in the previous occurrences of the same day.

In our case, the role of Bill Murray is played by two very different but often overlapping groups of actors: experienced student activists and members of political groups. The role of the former is almost obvious: there is a direct transmission of information and expertise from those who are older and more experienced to those who have just started their university career or their political activity. It is also considered normal by student activists, who tend to maintain and cherish links between older and younger activists:

The older people always try to give talks about the previous mobilisation.⁴⁰⁴ (E12)

But differences in age and experience, with the time span of a short university career, are far from being significant enough to play a relevant role, without the second factor. The participation in political groups acts as an accelerator of the activism experience inside universities, enhancing its intensity and making the individual able to absorb a much higher number of memories. On this point the activists' answers are unanimous, both in Italy and in Spain:

The movement does not commemorate. But you find the stories inside the student organisations.⁴⁰⁵ (I1)

You learn only in two ways: by studying, if you specialise in such a topic, or by belonging to a political organisation, that acts as a deposit of the movement's memory. Without political organisation there is no memory of the student movement, there is no possibility of analysis. [...] Memory only exists because someone works politically, having a political organisation, a tool, something that from outside keeps a continuity in the universities.⁴⁰⁶ (E7)

This answer is transversal in respect to the cleavage of organisational cultures: even those who are generically sceptical about student organisations and are faithful to a

⁴⁰⁴ 'Siempre la gente mas viejas intenta dar charlas sobre lo que fue la movilizaci3n anterior.'

⁴⁰⁵ 'Il movimento non commemora, non ricorda. Ma ritrovi i racconti all'interno delle organizzazioni studentesche.'

⁴⁰⁶ 'Solo se aprende por dos v3as: por el estudio, si te especializas en ese tema, o por la pertenencia a una organizaci3n pol3tica, que act3a como depositaria de la memoria del movimiento. Sin organizaci3n pol3tica o de cualquier otro tipo, no existe memoria del movimiento estudiantil, no existe posibilidad de analizar. [...] La memoria solo existe porque se trabaja pol3ticamente, en base a tener una organizaci3n pol3tica, una herramienta, algo que desde fuera mantenga una continuidad en las universidades.'

strict interpretation of the assembly-based model recognise that organised groups are the most relevant factor in ensuring cultural continuity between different waves of mobilisation. The same activist that proposed the ‘eternal recurrence’ metaphor, immediately followed it with this consideration:

It is true that associations help to mitigate a little this eternal recurrence. Assemblies no, they don't allow it.⁴⁰⁷ (E8)

This consideration is very present in the movement debate about organisational models. The need to establish an organisational form that, while preserving the assembly-based model, would be able to maintain continuity, store memories and transmit experience was, according to one of the key actors in that process, one of the main reasons that (during the anti-Bolonia campaign in Seville) the *Movimiento de Acción Estudiantil* (MAE) was formed:

We try to have continuity, sure. [...] Thanks to the permanent organisation of the MAE, we try to accumulate experience.⁴⁰⁸ (E12)

These considerations echo some of the most relevant contributions to the scholarly debate on movement continuity, in particular those proposed by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier and Suzanne Staggenborg in reference to the women's movement and its ‘rebirth’ in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Taylor (1989) proposed the concept of ‘abeyance’, as a ‘holding process by which movements sustain themselves in nonreceptive political environments and provide continuity from one stage of mobilization to another’, facilitated by ‘abeyance structures’, defined as ‘organizations capable of sustaining collective challenges under circumstances unfavorable to mass mobilization’. This model reflects an emphasis on formalised organisations that was later downplayed by further research on the role of culture in enabling movement continuity in abeyance (Taylor and Whittier 1992). The inclusion of cultural factors in the analysis of movement continuity allows a widening of the focus from formalised organisations to ‘more fluid and diverse’ (Staggenborg 1996: 144) sets of activities.

⁴⁰⁷ ‘Es verdad que las asociaciones permiten mitigar un poco ese eterno retorno, las asambleas no, non lo permiten.’

⁴⁰⁸ ‘Se entiende que haya continuidad, claro. [...] gracias a la organización permanente del MAE, se intente que la experiencia se acumule.’

5. ‘What came before us, we lived it, as an organisation’: movement areas as mnemonic communities

As we have seen, political groups are a fundamental actor in the transmission of memory, playing a central role in most of the processes I have described. But if their role is quite clearly recognisable in providing the material, organisational and symbolic structure for mobilisation, in passing on an occupied room or in enabling the transmission of practical experience and knowledge from one cohort to another, things are significantly more complicated when we pass from the field of syntax to that of semantics, from the forms of memory to the past to which these forms refer.

In fact, to say that alternative memories in respect to the main representations reproduced in the mass media forum of the public sphere are transmitted by political groups, if we use the traditional concept of Social Movement Organisation, we would need to have groups characterised by a structural continuity that goes back until the past that is remembered, and this is rarely the case. There are, of course, and as we have seen in the previous chapter, references to the groups' own histories, references which I have called ‘origin stories’. But none of the groups of the latest cycle of mobilisation from 2008 to 2011, both in Spain and in Italy, have a continuity that goes back to the '70s. The national student networks active in Italy were born within this cycle, or right before it, and only a few of the local associations are more than 20 years old. Many of the collectives were born during the Pantera in 1990, while the origin of others is now unknown to their members, and this says enough about the level of continuity. The same considerations apply to the Spanish case, as we have already seen in the descriptive part. Furthermore, not only is the student movement characterised by a rapid turnover of activists, given the peculiarity of organising a structurally transitory condition, but also the level of formalisation and institutionalisation of political groups, both in Italy and in Spain, is extremely low and diverse. If we add to this picture the significant level of pluralism and factionalism that characterises the context of the Italian and Spanish student movement, it becomes quite clear how far the traditional concept of Social Movement Organisation is from the reality we are analysing.

This is not a new or undetected phenomenon: in the last 20 years, social movement scholars have repeatedly pointed out the variety of actors, networks, and organisational practices that are involved in collective action, beyond the traditional definition of

SMOs (see della Porta and Diani 2006:135-162). Researchers working on social movement continuity have been particularly interested in this issue, because shifting the focus from formal organisation to a wider set of activities implies a different conception of continuity. In fact, 'for a social movement to continue, there must be connections among activists of different ages and from various eras' (Whittier 1995: 224). Therefore, if we conceptualise movement continuity as the full persistence of a social movement, in all its traits, and over time, there must be an institutional setting able to provide these direct connections. If, instead, we are looking for memories and legacies able to establish symbolic and discursive associations between waves of mobilisation, the need for institutional continuity in formalised organisations able to provide direct connections between activists belonging to different eras becomes less stringent.

Alberto Melucci criticised 'those who view collective action from a professional-political standpoint', because they 'usually confine their observation to the visible face of mobilization', while according to his perspective 'latency and visibility are two interrelated poles of collective action' (Melucci 1989: 70). During phases of 'latency', continuity is ensured by 'movement areas [...], networks composed of a multiplicity of groups that are dispersed, fragmented and submerged in everyday life, and which act as cultural laboratories'. These 'submerged networks function as a system of exchanges, in which individuals and information circulate. Memberships are multiple and involvement is limited and temporary; personal involvement is a condition for participation. The latent movement areas create new cultural codes and enable individuals to put them into practice' (Melucci 1989: 60). Similarly, Buechler (1990), analysing the women's movement, introduced the concept of 'social movement community (SMC)', as 'parallel to SMO' working 'through informal networks of politicized individuals with fluid boundaries, flexible leadership structures, and malleable divisions of labor' (Buechler 1990: 42), that according to Suzanne Staggenborg prove to be fundamental for the capacity of a movement to 'endure and even thrive beyond the decline of a protest cycle' (Staggenborg 1998: 199).

These concepts share the common goal to integrate in the analysis sets of activities that differ from those of SMOs in two aspects: on the one hand, the focus of their action, which extends past the traditional repertoire of political protest, including cultural and individual activities; and on the other hand the structure of the relationship between members, more characterised by informal exchanges and networks than by formal and

professional institutions. For these reasons, social movement studies increasingly tend to include references to countercultures, subcultures and scenes (Bennett 1999, Martin 2009, Leach and Haunss 2009), in order to account for a wider spectrum of social processes and to avoid the reduction of the complex and articulated cultural and symbolic dimension of collective action to collateral factors in respect to state-addressing political protest. Furthermore, these approaches are particularly useful to debunk superficial narratives of the ‘immaculate conception’ of social movements (Taylor 1989: 761). ‘A cultural approach to movement continuity’ can offer ‘promising avenues to explain emerging waves of protest that uninformed observers are often too quick to categorise as “spontaneous”, “new” and “unprecedented”.’ (Flesher Fominaya 2013: 121).

The relevance of these concepts for the study of movement memories is twofold: on the one hand, these cultural structures are often the outcome of past mobilisations, and their legacy (Friedman 1993); and, on the other hand, they tend to reproduce the memory of the past (Woliver 1993). Being able to analyse the background of mobilisations, the structures responsible for political socialisation between different waves of mobilisation, means to obtain a privileged standpoint to study mnemonic processes.

How are these concepts applicable to the empirical cases we are analysing?

As far as the political groups involved in the mobilisations we are considering here are concerned, the ideal types of SMOs and SMC are two poles of a continuum in which a wide set of actors can be placed. I am using the concept of ‘movement areas’ to identify the actors involved in the student movements in Italy and Spain in the last few years, because its width, generality and comprehensibility make it able to cover all the different actors involved. Nevertheless, it has to be said that different political groups, in both national contexts, are characterised by different organisational cultures, none of which correspond to all the traits described in the literature that I have just summarised. For example, groups linked to the political tradition of Italian post-autonomous social centres are the closest to Melucci’s definition (this, in fact, has been elaborated in the research on social centres in Milan in the 1980s), sharing both the fundamental difference with traditional SMOs that I have listed: involvement in cultural activities and lack of a formal institutional organisation. But even in this area there are student collectives that act in the university context as student political organisations: the concept of ‘movement area’, in this case, is particularly useful not to lose sight with the wider world of activities (social centres, associations, etc.) to which these collectives

refer, beyond the universities. On the other hand, and still in the Italian case, there are political groups whose self-identify as ‘student unions’ is characterised by formal statutes and institutional division of responsibilities, but with quite loose structures and internal procedures that have been deeply influenced by the participation in social movements. Another peculiar case, in the Spanish context, is represented by independentist student unions in Catalonia and the Basque Country: similarly to their Italian counterparts, they self-identify as ‘unions’, with formal statutes and the ambition to represent students outside movement assemblies, the role of which they recognise, however, as a small part of a much larger galaxy of groups, parties, trade unions, cultural associations, and festivals that constitute ‘the independentist Left’.

For the purposes of this work, the most relevant factor is that all these different ‘movement areas’ existed before the wave of student mobilisation of the last few years, played a relevant role, and continued to exist after their end, even if transformed by the experience. These movement areas take care of a significant part of the processes that ensure movement cultural continuity, working, as we will see, as mnemonic communities.

The emphasis I am putting on the role of movement areas does not imply that the movement *in se* is unable to conduct memory work: in Chapter 6, I have described many forms of memory produced and reproduced at the movement level. Movement areas act as mnemonic communities both behind the movement level, in the background work that precedes mobilisation, and in the movement. In fact, Meyer and Corrigan-Brown have noted, that often ‘social movements are coalition affairs, featuring sometimes loosely negotiated alliances among groups and individuals with different agendas’ (Meyer & Corrigan-Brown, 2005, p. 329), especially in very politicised contexts. Coalitions can be invisible and informal, but, most of the time, they exist, and a political group ‘may obscure its own identity in service of a larger movement, diminishing its visibility in mass media or its capacity to recruit members’ (Meyer & Corrigan-Brown, 2005, p. 331), but it almost never completely dissolves.

The process is described well by an activist from the social centre area in Naples, telling the story of the formation of the assembly in the department of humanities:

In the assembly there was what was left of the Collective of Humanities, with an M-L background, with a history that is very different from ours, there were the comrades of Link, [...] there were individual members of Rifondazione, but we're talking about 3 or 4

people from each group, in an assembly of 500 students, thus everyone coming from an organised trajectory, even the M-L group, that had big difficulties in dissolving itself in the movement, was practically forced, for good or for bad, to say 'fine, let's dissolve the groups'. And then the Collective of Humanities dissolved, then now they exist in a different form, clearly they've reorganised, they occupied some spaces.⁴⁰⁹ (I13)

Assemblies are the true expression of the movement, but within these assemblies there are many different people, some with a 'history' that might be 'different from somebody else's history'. Organised actors have to 'dissolve', renouncing their own visibility to participate in the assembly, but later, after the end of the wave of mobilisation, they tend to reorganise. Obviously this dynamic does not reflect the totality of university students participating in the mobilisation, only a minority: all the interviewees explained that the majority of the students participating in assemblies and demonstrations do not participate in any of the student groups, and sometimes are not even aware of their existence. Determining which of the movement's choices are made by assemblies and which are made by movement areas goes beyond the purposes of this research. What is important is to establish the role of movement areas in a specific dynamic: the reproduction of memory. In this regard, activists who participate in groups and activists who participate in the movement as individuals have different roles. Coming back to the 'Groundhog Day' analogy, movement areas' activists play Bill Murray's role, by using information from previous experiences and passing this on to others, while individual activists are like the inhabitants of the small town, doing everything for the first time.

The perception of the movement experience is different: while people who participated to the movement as individual activists tended to tell the story of the movement starting from the first assembly, members of movement areas tend to go even further back. The movement is something that happened to them while they were already part of a history that existed before and will continue in the future. For example, when recounting the first days of the Anomalous Wave of 2008, an activist from the social centre area in

⁴⁰⁹ 'Dentro l'assemblea c'era ciò che restava del collettivo di lettere, di formazione m-l, con una storia anche molto diversa da quella che è la nostra storia, c'erano i compagni di Link, [...], c'erano singoli di Rifondazione, però stiamo parlando numericamente di 3 o 4 per struttura, su circa 500 studenti, quindi chiunque veniva da un percorso organizzato, anche il pezzo m-l, che aveva grandissime difficoltà a sciogliersi dentro il movimento, in realtà lì si trovò di fatto costretto, nel bene e nel male, a dire benissimo, sciogliamo le strutture. E lì il collettivo di lettere si sciolse, poi oggi esistono in altra forma, chiaramente si sono organizzati, hanno occupato degli spazi.'

Padua told me ‘you saw that there was something different, something we had never seen. [...] It was something different, true, stimulating’ (I9).

There is a perception of being a part of history, more than just a wave of student mobilisation, but also longer than the single experience of a student activist. The participation in a movement area extends the domain of possibility for knowledge and experience. As a member of a student union in Barcelona told me, when referring to a wave of protest that happened before she had even started university, ‘the anti-LOU campaign, that preceded us, we, as an organisation, lived it’ (E2).

Movement areas act as ‘mnemonic communities’ (Zerubavel 1996), as social groups in which ‘mnemonic socialisation’ happens. Memory is collective because it is a process that happens in a social framework, as Halbwachs theorised:

There is no point in seeking where [...] [memories] are preserved in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access: for they are recalled to me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them.
(Halbwachs 1992: 38)

In their stories, many activists mentioned these socialisation processes, within their movement area:

In the Political Collective you saw this very clearly, because a certain kind of discourse is strongly transmitted, because clearly you enter the collective and you have the guys who are about to leave the university, you're a freshman, you approach a collective and learn much from those who are about to leave the university, and then in some way a collective discourse is transmitted.⁴¹⁰ (I19)

In this way, activists participating in movement areas access a repertoire of memories that has been accumulating in different waves of mobilisation, and that is not only limited to the borders of the movement area. There are continuous exchanges and interactions between the memory of the areas and that of the movement. In fact, most of the times, movement areas are the bearers of memories that involve the entire

⁴¹⁰ ‘Nel Collettivo Politico questa cosa la vedi in maniera nitida, perché le pratiche, anche un certo tipo di discorso, si tramanda tanto, perché chiaramente tu entri in collettivo e hai i ragazzi che stanno per uscire dall’università, quindi magari tu sei una matricola, ti avvicini a un collettivo e apprendi molto da quelli che stanno per uscire dal collettivo perché stanno per uscire dall’università, e quindi in qualche modo un discorso collettivo si tramanda.’

movement. This regards material memories, like occupied rooms, that almost always start as the outcome of the movement and then become controlled by one specific movement area; organisational memories, like the collectives that are formed during mobilisations and later become part of a specific movement area (this is the case of most of the collectives born during the Pantera in Rome, that later became part of the neo-Trotskyist network *Atenei in Rivolta*, for example); and of discursive memories, like the memory of the *Capuchinada* in Barcelona, that, as we have seen, is guarded particularly by student associations near to the Communist Party and Izquierda Unida. Movement areas, in this way, work as mnemonic communities and as cultural abeyance structures, enabling some cultural continuities in a movement, like that of university students in Italy and Spain, which has been, until now, structurally unable to develop any organisational continuity.

6. ‘I learned it from the newspapers’: a complex repertoire, plural repositories, and movement culture permeability

Aleida Assmann distinguished between ‘intergenerational’ and ‘transgenerational’ memories: it is this passage, from a direct relationship between people belonging to the same generation, to an indirect relationship between people who do not share the same era, that makes the mediating intervention of culture and institutions necessary for the transmission of memory (Assmann 2006). This passage is not without consequences:

It must be emphasized here that the step from individual to collective memory does not afford an easy analogy. Institutions and groups do not possess a memory like individuals; there is, of course, no equivalent to the neurological system or the anthropological disposition. Institutions and larger social groups, such as nations, states, the church, or a firm do not ‘have’ a memory; they ‘make’ one for themselves with the aid of memorial signs such as symbols, texts, images, rites, ceremonies, places, and monuments. Together with such a memory, these groups and institutions ‘construct’ an identity. Such a memory is based on selection and exclusion, neatly separating useful from not useful, and relevant from irrelevant memories. Hence a political memory is necessarily a mediated memory. It resides in material media, symbols and practices which have to be engrafted into the hearts and minds of individuals. (Assmann 2006: 216)

From this point of view, saying that memory is ‘stored’ somewhere is little more than a metaphor. Remembering is something that happens in the present, and memories are not produced only once, but are continuously reproduced every time they are accessed. Memory studies have been increasingly developing towards a dynamic model, analysing commemoration as a set of mnemonic practices situated in the present (Olick and Robbins 1998).

Therefore, if we were to define a repertoire of memory, drawing on Tilly’s ‘repertoire of contention’ (1986), it could not be conceptualised as a virtual box in which representations of the past are stored, but as the set of mnemonic practices that actors put in place in reference to the past.

Defining the repertoire of memories as a set of practices and not as a storing facility means to focus the attention on the actors, on their active role in mnemonic processes, situated in the context of their present action. Nevertheless, the context in which mnemonic practices take place, and the material and symbolic sources from which actors draw the representations of the past, heavily influence memory processes. What from the point of view of the actors is a repertoire of memories, reproduced in mnemonic practices situated in different spheres, from the point of view of the sources, and of the objectified carriers of memory, is a set of different repositories of mnemonic products that embody the representations of the past.

Following this approach, I use two different concepts (repertoire and repositories) to refer, respectively, to sets of mnemonic practices and sets of mnemonic products. With *repertoire of memory* I identify the set of mnemonic practices that individual and collective actors involved in collective action can put in place in reference to the past, while with *repositories of memories* I identify the sets of products, both implicit and explicit, formal and informal, symbolic and material that act as objectified carriers of the past.

In the context of the cases we are analysing, the repertoire of memory of the actors corresponds to different repositories, linked to different discursive forums of the public sphere. So what are the relationships between them?

In fact, the presence of alternative memories reproduced in the forum of movement culture should not lead us to forget that the ‘mass media provide a master forum’ (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht 2002:10) for public discourse, and this also involves activists, not only as producers of mnemonic material, as we have seen in the previous chapter, but also as an audience of the representations of the past reproduced

in the media. This is evident for what regards the memories of the 1960s and 1970s, as we have seen in this chapter, but not only for those. When an activist in Rome was telling me about previous waves of student mobilisation, she said:

There was something in 2005, but I learned it from the newspapers, and I remember very little about what happened.⁴¹¹ (I7)

Even recent memories, episodes that we now consider part of the same wave of mobilisation these people participated in, are often mediated in the mass media forum of the public sphere. Movement culture is far from being *the* culture of activists: it is only one of the repositories they continuously access.

7. Concluding remarks

Having identified the presence, in the activists' accounts, of narratives coming both from the mainstream repository of the media and from alternative repositories of movement areas, how is this presence determined and regulated? Why do narratives coming from the mediatised public memory prevail in some cases, while alternative narratives reproduced in movement areas tend to dominate in others?

These were not my research questions, and the analysis conducted in this chapter aimed more at reconstructing the repertoire of memory of current activists and its corresponding repositories than at explaining the reasons behind the success of specific narratives in respect to others in different contexts and areas. That goal would require a different scope and level of analysis. Nevertheless, the analysis shows some interesting elements in this sense, which might be useful for further research on this issue. Based on the analysis of the interviews, I can propose some of the most relevant factors influencing these processes that might be the basis of a future typology: distance, organisational continuity, institutional means of mnemonic agency and relative position in the field. *Distance* is probably the most banal: the fact that the representations of the *Pantera*, for example, in the Italian context, are significantly more group-specific than the representations of 1968, probably has much to do with the fact that the former is significantly nearer in time, and therefore more likely to be

⁴¹¹ 'Qualcosa c'è stato nel 2005, ma io l'ho vissuta tramite i giornali, e ricordo anche poco bene quello che successe.'

incorporated in the mnemonic repositories of political groups that were born in the same period. The further back in time an event is, the more likely it is that mediated memories will prevail over alternative memories. *Organisational continuity* is strictly related to distance, because the two factors tend to interact with each other systematically: the *Pantera* is 'near' and the 1970s are 'far' for student groups with roots in the 1990s, while 1977 becomes 'near' for the activists of the autonomous collective in Turin, whose political area claims a direct continuity with the *Autonomia Operaia* of 1970s. In fact, those activists are the only ones to claim a positive legacy of 1977, contrary to all the other interviewees. The more a social actor is able to claim organisational continuity over a certain past, the more self-sufficient it is from a mnemonic point of view. *Institutional means of mnemonic agency* are related to the capacity of political actors to produce and spread independent and alternative representations of the past. Formal and established organisations, from this point of view, have a clear advantage in respect to ephemeral self-organised collectives. The availability of intellectuals, journalists, publishing houses, etc. is also a clear factor. The more a political group possess institutional means of institutional agency, the more it is able to make alternative memories prevail over mediated memories in its audience. *Relative position in the field*: I observed that groups that are identified and self-identify as more marginal tend to be less permeable to mediated memories, while groups that are identified and self-identify as more representative of the majority of the students tend to be more permeable. Strong and radical identity borders tend to create a stronger isolation, in terms of trust, between activists and public memory, and a stronger sense of motivation and commitment in learning the history of the group.

Furthermore, not only do factors related to political actors need to be taken into account, but also contextual aspects. For example, the resistance to the *sixty-eight-isation* of the memory of the 1960s and 1970s shown by Spanish activists might be linked to the generally weaker presence of such memories in the mass media forum, due, as we have seen in the previous chapter, to both Francoist censorship and to the master frame of the transition. If a certain past is less salient, less present in the mediated public sphere, it tends to be significantly less remembered by contemporary activists. Yet, when it is, it is also significantly less influenced by media-related factors. This process plays a significant role in a paradox we will address in the next chapter: the memory of the 1960s and 1970s in the Spanish context seems to have a higher potential for

legitimation towards contemporary mobilisation by comparison to the Italian context, but its weak presence in the public sphere makes this potential difficult to express.

Chapter 8 - Pragmatics: memory, identity and strategy

As we have seen in Chapter 2, memory, in respect to social movements, has traditionally been studied as an outcome of mobilisation, or as an instrumental object that can be used in collective action. The influence of memory on contemporary mobilisation has been almost completely overlooked by the scholarship, in terms of a complete empirical analyses of the different ways in which the public representations of the past, both inside and outside the movement, are able to shape collective action or, more in general, to have an influence on the field of action in which social movements operate. Nevertheless, the literature on social movements, in particular after the so-called ‘cultural turn’, has been increasingly underlining the role of symbolic, discursive and narrative factors in structuring movements’ action (Polletta 2006, Whittier 2002). The analysis conducted in this chapter is situated in this line of work, in the attempt to assess, in the most comprehensive way possible, the impact of memories on collective action. In particular, I am interested in investigating the role of the public representation of a contentious past in the strategic choices of the student movements in Italy and Spain.

The growing interest towards the concept of strategy and the factors that influence movements’ strategic choices has emerged in the last decade as an attempt to connect structure and agency, avoiding mechanistic simplification and superficial reification of the movements’ behaviour. As Nancy Whittier has usefully summarised:

Strategizing is the process of interpreting political opportunities, cultural acceptability, goals, and the tactics likely to promote change. When they strategize, movement participants debate how to balance their beliefs about what is possible with their views on what matters, what compromises are acceptable, and who they are (their collective identity). In other words, strategies are a result of both external contexts and internal movement dynamics. (Whittier 2002: 299)

Among these ‘internal movement dynamics’, memory is a relevant factor. Its analysis can provide a relevant contribution to the advancement of social movement studies, in particular when connected to strategic choices. In fact, investigating the ways in which strategic choices are informed by symbolic elements might help to free the analysis of strategic choices from the confines of game theory, situating them into a culturally

structured environment. Francesca Polletta, referring to the study of how storytelling figures in protest and politics, has pointed out:

It would also help us to identify the mechanisms by which culture sets the terms of strategic action, but without treating actors as strategic dupes. (Polletta 2006: 27)

This chapter is based on the analysis of activists' accounts, through the distinction between *explicit* memories (symbolic and discursive associations made in public to a recognisable past) and *implicit* (symbolic references to the past that are embedded in the identity and in the repertoire of action of movement actors) and between the cases in which memory acts as a *resource* and those in which it acts as a *constraint*. The combination of these categories provides four different types of strategic choices: *appropriation*, *replication*, *compliance* and *obedience*.

This analysis allows me to propose four main arguments. First, I argue for an active role of movements in the relationship with memories, not only in reconstructing representations of the past (as I have described in Chapter 7) but also in taking into account the past in their strategic choices. Second, I aim to broaden the analysis of the various ways in which memory influences action: scholars of social movements have shown some examples of influence of the past on the strategic choices of actors, referring, in particular to the processes of appropriation of symbols referring to the past (Harris 2006, Jansen 2007). I argue that appropriation is not the only type of influence that memory can exercise on collective action, but rather it corresponds to the strategy that movements can choose in case of an explicit memory that presents itself as a resource, while in case of implicit memory and of constraints, different strategic choices have to be taken into account.

Third, I propose a non-deterministic notion of the relationship between memory and strategic choices: memories do not determine the choice of a strategy, but rather they generate strategic dilemmas that actors have to face. In case of an explicit resource, for example, activists face the strategic choice of appropriation: they have to decide whether to do it or not. In my interviews, I have found both positive and negative cases for all the strategic choices I refer to: cases in which activists decided to appropriate a certain memory and cases in which they decided not to appropriate it, cases in which they obeyed to a certain inherited constraint and cases in which they did not, etc. Memory plays a role in determining the strategic choices of activists, but such role is

significantly mediated by agency. Different factors are likely to play a role in such choices, and different memories can be more likely to generate a certain outcome, in terms of strategic choices, than others. But these considerations go beyond the scope of this work and should be left for further research.

Fourth, I describe the peculiar relationship between memory and identity, pointing out how memory work, through the strategic deployment of inherited identities, is a significant part of collective action. Activists tend to identify movement areas and political groups as the outcome of long-standing traditions and as the carriers of thick and heavy inherited identities, that correspond to what Gamson calls the ‘organisational layer’ (Gamson 1995: 100) of the multi-layered identity of social movement activists. I describe ‘limited apostasy’ as the choice to downplay inherited identities in order to be freer and lighter and to be able to address a broader audience, and I show how both an actor’s identity and other actors’ inherited identities can become the object of strategic work.

Based on the interview material, I will illustrate the kinds of impact that *explicit memories* – that is, symbolic and discursive associations made in public to a recognisable past – have in strategic choices, focusing on *resources* in sections 1 and 2 and on *constraints* in section 3. Then, I will describe the types of impact *implicit memories* – that is, the symbolic references to the past that are embedded in the identity and in the repertoire of action of movement actors, focusing on *resources* in section 4 and on *constraints* in section 5.

Sections from 6 to 12 will be dedicated to the analysis of the active work of activists in respect to the memory-related components of collective identities, and the reciprocal influence between this work and mobilisation. This last chapter does not require concluding remarks, since they will be included in the general conclusions (Chapter 9).

	EXPLICIT	IMPLICIT
RESOURCE	Choice: \pm appropriation Positive cases: Palazzo Campana, victims in UCM Negative cases: teachers, media comparisons Sections 1 and 2	Choice: \pm replication Positive cases: experienced activists, known practices, occupied spaces, etc. Negative cases: tactical innovation Section 4
CONSTRAINT	Choice: \pm compliance Positive cases: Angelo Azzurro, Axe in Seville Negative cases: social centre in Turin Section 3	Choice: \pm obedience Positive cases: <i>pregiudiziale antifascista</i> , violence as metonymy of radicality Negative cases: 22 November 2010 (but unsaid) Section 5

Table 8.1: a typology of strategic choices referring to memory

Explicit resources

In the following paragraphs I will examine the cases in which activists find, in their field of action, explicit references to the past, either proposed by external actors (1) or directly from the movement (2), that they can choose to use or not as a resource. In this case the strategic choice that movements have to make is on potential *appropriation*: they can decide to appropriate, or not to appropriate, a symbolic resource coming from the past.

1. The return of the ‘already seen’: comparisons from outside and movement reactions

A first type of reference to the past that activists face in collective action is the one proposed by external actors, typically the media or teachers.

The latter case is not considered central by most activists, who tend not to recognise teachers as playing a particularly relevant pedagogic role as mnemonic agents, or as carriers of experiences that might prove useful for the mobilisation. Teachers are mentioned as useful allies or as opponents, but without significantly stressing their role as carriers of memory, except for the references to a generically nostalgic attitude, which activists, both in Italy and in Spain, tend to view as paternalistic:

I remember many teachers that laughed and sneered during an assembly, because they were seeing once again the things they had lived through many years before. ⁴¹²(I1)

In the Complutense [University] the professors come from the 1970s, from the movements of the 1970s, and together with actors they were the only two social elements that could say 'I am a leftist'. There are many professors that are friendly and nice, and that view the movements with paternalism. ⁴¹³(E6)

I believe that paternalism is one of the words that can best define the way in which the professors view what we kids are doing. ⁴¹⁴(E5)

Furthermore, there is an element of generational conflict between student activists and professors, even those who are movement veterans. They are often accused of having 'switched sides' and betrayed the ideals of their youth. In Italy this often comes up when discussing 1968, with the reference to the so-called 'red barons'⁴¹⁵, and, in general, to people with a history of activism and radical militancy in the '70s who are now powerful professors, politicians, journalists, etc.

I'm not one of those who criticises 1968, but neither I am one of those who glorifies it much, because the ruling class of today is the one that came out of 1968, in general, not

⁴¹² 'Ricordo tanti docenti che ridevano e sghignazzano durante un'assemblea, perché rivedevano che avevano vissuto loro tanti anni fa.'

⁴¹³ 'En la Complutense, los profesores vienen de los años 70, de los movimientos de los años 70, y junto a los actores son los únicos dos elementos sociales que han podido decir "yo soy de izquierda", hay un montón de profesores majetes, simpáticos, que veían como con paternalismo los movimientos que había.'

⁴¹⁴ 'Creo que el paternalismo sea una de las palabra que mejor define como veían los profesores lo que hacíamos los chavales.'

⁴¹⁵ In Italy *barone* (baron) is a derogatory term used colloquially to identify a full professor, with a high level of academic power, who uses it to grant privileges to himself and his associates. Therefore, 'red barons' is a label used to underline to hypocrisy of leftist professors, or of professors with a past of activism, who engage in the same kind of power games, nepotism and patronage that characterise a significant part of Italian academia.

only the classic examples [of people that switched to the right] of Giuliano Ferrara, Liguori, etc.⁴¹⁶(I8)

1968 radically impacted on the decision-making processes of universities, and then many of the people who participated in those mobilisations became worse than the ones that were there before. Those mobilisations created ‘red barons’, something of which the centre-right [political coalition] usually speaks, but we have to be intellectually honest and say that it does exist, there is a link between the most powerful barons in this country and the centre-left.⁴¹⁷ (I13)

This recurrent characterisation of the veterans of the Italian '68 – resonating with the narrative of the ‘generational’ movement, the revolt of a generation which took the place of the previous one also in terms of power, reproducing, ultimately, the same behaviours and mechanisms that it was born to criticise – also has its Spanish counterpart. In the chapter discussing the representation of the Spanish student movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the media, I have already mentioned how the participation to some key events of the anti-Francoist struggle, i.e. the *capuchinada* of 1966, became in the 1980s and 1990s a stage in the *cursus honorum* of democratic politicians, who in time were gaining power. Unsurprisingly, this phenomenon did not spare academia, and contemporary student activists tend to remember that their current counterparts were, in their youth, participating in popular struggles, and to point out what they consider as either hypocrisy or betrayal:

Those that then were activists of the student movement now do not consider the current movement as the heir of that experience. In the anti-Bologna movement, the majority of the faculty, who in their time participated in anti-Francoism, was against the movement. Then, the transmission of memory becomes more difficult.⁴¹⁸ (E19)

⁴¹⁶ ‘Non sono uno di quelli che critica il '68 ma neanche uno di quelli che lo glorifica tanto, perché la classe dirigente di oggi è quella uscita dal '68, quindi al di là dei classici esempi di Giuliano Ferrara, Liguori, ecc.’

⁴¹⁷ ‘Il 68 ha inciso radicalmente nei processi di decisione universitari, poi molte di quelle mobilitazioni sono diventate peggiori di quelle che c'erano prima, hanno creato anche il baronato rosso di cui è vero parla il centrodestra, ma non possiamo non essere onesti intellettualmente e dire che esiste, che esiste un legame tra i più potenti baroni di questi paesi e il centrosinistra di questo paese.’

⁴¹⁸ ‘Los que en eso tiempo fueron activistas del movimiento estudiantil ahora no consideran el actual movimiento heredero de aquella experiencia. En el movimiento anti Bologna la mayoría del profesorado, que en su tiempo participo en el antifranquismo, estaba en contra del movimiento, entonces la transmisión de la memoria se hace muy difícil.’

A particularly relevant role of some teachers in building, through memory, a sense of continuity between the anti-Francoist struggles and the present, is recognised by some activists in Barcelona about the professors who took part in the *capuchinada* of 1966 and in particular to Francisco Fernandez Buey, who is often mentioned both as a point of reference for contemporary struggles and as a symbol of the '60s and '70s:

And in the end we all originate from the transition, from the Sindicato Democrático... We derive from those people, and in the end many of those who founded the Sindicato Democrático were our professors in the university. Then, there was a transmission in this sense. Some time ago Paco Fernandez Buey died, he was a comrade of ours at the university and in the struggles, and as a senior professor he always spoke in our favour, and in the end, when we had some meetings, he told us many things. He transmitted something to us: some perspectives, some visions... It is difficult to meet, inside the student movement, someone who is not organised in a union or in some political organisation, [someone] with such historical perspective. It is complicated, at the movement level. The view is very limited inside the movement. Either the organisations do this work, of taking some of the historical baggage, or it is complicated. This works also for the professors, like when the Caputxinada was celebrated.⁴¹⁹(E2)

In the last few years, given that the movement was joined by a sector of the faculty, many of whom were part of the struggle of the 1960s, some small symbolic celebration of that moment was established. During the years of the occupations there were people who proposed similarities with the famous May 1968 and some time later, for example, Francisco Fernandez Buey published the book in which he recuperated the memory of what it had meant for the foundation of the Sindicato Democrático de la Universidad de Barcelona, which was the first instrument of student organisation against Francoism.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁹ 'Y al final derivamos todos de la transición, del Sindicato Democrático... derivamos de esta gente, no, al final muchos de los que fundaron, como era, el Sd... el Sindicato Democrático han sido profesores nuestros en la facultad, no? Pues, bueno, hay una transferencia en este sentido. Se murió el otro día Paco Fernandez Buey, no, pues había sido compañero nuestro en la universidad y las luchas, como catedrático siempre tuvo nuestra voz, al final él, pues cuando hacíamos una reunión nos contaba muchas cosas... ciertas perspectivas, cierta visión, nos han trasladado... es difícil encontrar dentro del movimiento estudiantil gente que no esta organizada un un sindicato o in una organización política o tal, que tenga mucha perspectiva histórica, es complicado, a nivel de movimiento. Se vive muy... La visión es muy limitada entre del movimiento, o las organizaciones hacen ese trabajo, de pues coger un poco el bagaje histórico, o es complicado. También los profesores, no, pues ahora se celebraba lo de la caputxinada no, pues...'

⁴²⁰ 'En los últimos años como se ha incorporado un sector del profesorado que muchos estuvieron parte de la lucha de los 60 se han establecido alguna pequeña decoración simbólica de ese momento. Durante los años de la ocupaciones etc. hubo quien planteo similitudes con el mayo del 68 famoso y poco después se hizo por ejemplo Francisco Fernandez Buey publico el libro en el que recuperaba la memoria sobre lo que había significado la fundación del Sindicato Democrático de la Universidad de Barcelona, que fue el primer órgano de organización estudiantil contra el franquismo.'

(E16)

This phenomenon is probably connected both to the recent death of Fernandez Buey (he died in August 2012, a few weeks before the interviews), and with his publication, in 2009, of the book *Por una universidad democratica*, in which he collected his essays about the students struggles of the 1960s and the future of the university, and with the attempts of recuperations of the memory of the *capuchinada* that I have already mentioned in the previous chapter. What is relevant for the topic of this chapter is the potential value for the movement of these commemorations.

There was indeed a small symbolic recuperation of this, in order to say ‘man, be careful about speaking ill of the students that mobilise, because historically they contributed to the democratisation of society, it was a vanguard movement against the dictatorship’. There was a recuperation of this and of the people in the academic context and in the intellectual culture that in their time, notwithstanding their differences in practices, defended the student movement from the slanders that were printed in the newspapers every day. Much of the argument was: ‘The students are always the vanguard, their struggle now is connected with all the struggles that students have made’. Nobody can be against the anti-Francoist student movement.⁴²¹(E16)

The potential legitimacy value of the symbolic connection between contemporary student struggles and the memory of the 1960s, the representation of which is almost unanimously positive in the public sphere because of its opposition to the dictatorship, is enormous. If ‘nobody can be against the anti-Francoist student movement’, then the more the contemporary movement is symbolically associated with the image of the students who fought against Franco, the more legitimacy their actions will have in the public sphere.

Nevertheless, this potential for legitimacy is rarely expressed, probably because of the lack of symbolic material, related to the student struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, with the necessary centrality in the public sphere. An activist in Barcelona explicitly told me

⁴²¹ ‘Si hubo como una pequeña recuperación simbólica de esto, para decir “hombre cuidado con hablar tan mal de los estudiantes que se movilizan, porque históricamente han contribuido a la democratización de la sociedad, fue un movimiento de vanguardia contra la dictadura, hubo como una recuperación de esto y de la gente del entorno académico y del mundo de la cultura intelectual que en su momento a pesar de tener su diferencia sobre la practica, defendio el movimiento estudiantil de la calumnia que salían el los diarios cada día. Mucho del argumento fue este, decir “siempre se dice que los estudiantes van por delante, pero la lucha que ellos están haciendo ahora, conecta con todas la lucha que ha hecho el estudiantado”. Nadie puede estar en contra del movimiento estudiantil antifranquista.’

that ‘the memory of the student mobilisations against Franco is positive, but they are too little remembered’ (E19) to make a difference. Even when, during a mobilisation, students and veterans share a commemorative event, the potential, in the words of contemporary activists, remains visible but *in nuce*, without the possibility to develop and have a real impact:

Only in the moment of the occupation were there references to 1968 by the press. It was a nice moment for us who were there, the fact of remembering for a while the *Capuchinada* and the *Sindicato Democratico de Estudiantes* that was created during fascism occupying this rectorate. It was a nice moment to remember it, but I can’t tell you that we took inspiration from that. I remember assemblies in which we read their demands and ours of today, and it was like ‘well, we are not too different, actually’, but, since in this country we have no historical memory, it can’t be done, I can’t tell you that this was a generational reference. We worked more at a level of curiosity, like ‘look what I’ve discovered, they occupied this’.⁴²² (E18)

This mention of the press as an external actor that proposes a comparison between contemporary student mobilisations and the 1970s is practically the only reference to an active role of the media in triggering such connections in the Spanish context, and this is perfectly coherent with what has already been said about the lack of centrality of the memory of the 1960s and 1970s in the Spanish public sphere. On the contrary, in the Italian context activists frequently refer to cases in which they have had to face comparisons with 1968 or 1977 prompted by the media.

The comparison [...] happens instrumentally from the media point of view. [...] Most times it is regarding conflict, and [the comparison] is with the 1970s. In the debate, on the one hand in respect to politics, on the other hand in respect to trade unions, the comparison is always with the 1970s, because it allows them to scare a part of the public.⁴²³ (I2)

⁴²² ‘Justo en el momento de ocupar se hicieron referencias al 68 por parte de la prensa. Fue un momento bonito por los que eráramos aquí recordar un poco la capuchinada y el sindicato democrático de estudiantes que se creo justamente durante el fascismo ocupando este rectorado. Si que fue un momento bonito recordar esto, pero tampoco te puedo decir nos inspiramos a esto. Me acuerdo asambleas aquí en ue leamos sus reivindicaciones y las nuestras de ahora, y era como, “bueno, no estamos tan lejos en realidad” pero como en este país lo de la memoria histórica no se ha hecho, no se lleva, no puedo decirte que fue como un referente generacional. Se trabaja mas a un nivel de curiosidad, como “mira lo que he descubierto, esto ya fue ocupado.”

⁴²³ ‘Il confronto [...] avviene strumentalmente sotto il profilo mediatico. [...] La maggior parte delle volte è sul piano del conflitto, ed è con gli anni '70. Nel dibattito da una parte verso la politica, dall'altro verso il sindacato, il confronto è sempre con gli anni '70 perché ti permette di spaventare una parte del pubblico.’

The comparison with the past always happens. [...] We have been compared to many things: '1968 is back, these are the traces of 1977', etc. I've heard the comparison with 1977, the fear that we failed in the same way as 1977, thus with a drift in a more conflictual, more violent direction, the demonisation of the movement and all. A comparison born from a fear imposed from the outside.⁴²⁴(I5)

This is permanent, and I think it always will be, on the part of the mainstream press. [...] The press has always made comparisons, you can find them even on single issues. For example, in recent years there were a few demonstrations, and 'L'amaca di Michele Serra'⁴²⁵ wrote: 'Please don't chant the same things that we chanted many years ago'. The media has always made comparisons that have nothing to do with what is happening.⁴²⁶(I1)

Italian activists complain about the comparisons proposed by the media, especially because they tend to be based on the narrative of the '68-*struggle* that I have analysed in a previous chapter: the polarisation on 1977, the characterisation of the movement as extremely factionalised and ideological, a focus on political violence and in particular on the association between politicisation, political violence and terrorism. Activists are worried about the 'instrumental' nature of these comparisons, about their use in order to 'scare the public', to 'demonise the movement', to impose issues and cleavages, in particular those connected with the repertoire of contention, that might divide the movement. In this way, memory becomes a substantially relevant factor in the internal debate of the movement, capable of influencing and shaping some of its strategic choices. Some activists provide direct accounts of this process:

It has an influence. I say this because I saw it, even in the discussions inside the movement. [...] The comparison with the past has strongly influenced the decisions that the movement had to take. On the one hand, it produces a new debate on the phase we're living, with the movement attacking the press, the media, rightly due to the fact that it makes no sense to

⁴²⁴ 'Il confronto col passato c'è sempre. [...] Siamo stati accostati: "è ritornato il '68, ecco gli strascichi del '77, ecc." Ho sentito fare il confronto col '77, la paura che si fallisse sulla scia di quanto fatto nel '77, quindi una deriva più conflittuale, più violenta, la demonizzazione del movimento e tutto quanto. Un confronto nato da una paura esterna.'

⁴²⁵ Daily column in the newspaper *La Repubblica*.

⁴²⁶ 'Questo è permanente, e penso che sarà sempre permanente da parte della stampa mainstream. [...] La stampa è stata sempre a fare paragoni, lo trovi anche sulle singole tematiche, ad esempio quest'anno che ci sono state un po' di manifestazioni, sull'amaca di Michele Serra che ti dice "per favore non cantate ancora le stesse cose che cantavamo noi tanti anni fa". I media hanno sempre fatto paragoni che non avevano nulla a che fare con quello che si svolgeva.'

compare us with experiences that do not exist anymore. On the other hand, the movement tends to replicate, maybe even in an unconscious way, the mistakes of the past⁴²⁷. (I1)

Then we try to give an answer in practical terms. In the last few years the movement has showed much intelligence. Thinking about the 22 December, when, after 14 December, and after having ravaged Rome, the relevant cadres of the movement, which at that time did not take its decisions in particularly broad bodies, took the decision to go in the opposite direction from the city centre. There is the intelligence to understand certain things.⁴²⁸(I2)

This latest quotation refers to the days immediately following 14 December 2010, when a national student demonstration against the university reform, in the centre of Rome, during the parliamentary debate on the vote of confidence towards the Berlusconi cabinet (on which the fate of the university reform depended) ended in violent clashes between some students and the police, with the pictures of black smoke coming up from the monuments of Piazza del Popolo dominating the front-page of every newspaper the following day. The comparison with the 1970s was ubiquitous in the press over the following days, and the fear of an escalation of violence on both sides characterised the preparations for the next demonstration, on 22 December, the day in which the law was finally passed. The decision to turn away from the city centre (where most of the governmental buildings are) and to march towards the periphery is explained by this activist as a conscious choice taken by considering, among other factors, the public comparison with the 1970s. This is a quite clear example of a strategic choice influenced by the dynamics of public memory: the memory of the 1970s shapes the perception and expectations of the public about political violence, and movement activists have to take this factor into account when establishing the course of their actions.

⁴²⁷ 'Ha influenza. Perché l'ho vissuto anche, nelle discussioni che c'erano all'interno dei movimenti. [...] La comparazione con il passato ha moltissimo influenzato le decisioni che il movimento doveva prendere. Da una parte in qualche modo producono dibattito nuovo rispetto alla fase che stanno vivendo, attaccano la stampa, i media, l'informazione giustamente sul fatto di dire è inutile che ci paragonate a esperienze che non esistono, dall'altra parte però spesso si replica, magari anche in maniera inconscia, quelli che sono gli errori del passato.'

⁴²⁸ 'Poi si prova a dare una risposta di natura pratica. Negli ultimi anni si è dimostrata tanta intelligenza, penso al 22 dicembre, quando, dopo il 14 dicembre, dopo aver messo a ferro e fuoco Roma, i quadri dirigenti del movimento, che all'epoca non aveva la sua sede decisionale in luoghi particolarmente ampi, prendono la decisione di andare fuori Roma, non andare verso il centro. C'è l'intelligenza di capire alcune cose.'

2. Imagined continuities: comparisons from inside and movement appropriation of memory

Memories, as myths, provide a high level for legitimization and de-legitimation:

Myths tend to exhibit both a foundational as well as a contra-present dynamic. The myth provides the fundament for and legitimizes existing systems when it is perceived by society as an expression of a common history, from which present circumstances derive. In contrast, the myth can also take on a contra-present and potentially delegitimizing meaning if it serves to contrast a 'deficient present' with the memory of a past, better era. (Erl1 2011: 34)

The example of the commemoration of the *Sindicato Democratico* during an occupation in Barcelona, that I have mentioned before, is one of the few episodes of a spontaneous and explicit appropriation of a past reference by the student movement, both in Italy and in Spain.

Something very similar happened in Turin in 2010, when the movement decided, during the mobilisation against the Gelmini reform, to occupy Palazzo Campana, now the seat of the department of mathematics, and symbol of the Italian *Sessantotto*: the occupation of the building, which was then the seat of the institute of humanities, in 1967, was one of the starting points of the movement. It was not a coincidence, but a conscious choice, given the lack of relevance of the building in the actual political geography of the university. Activists willingly decided to play with the memory of 1968:

1968 constitutes the foundation myth of the student movement in Italy, [...] and obviously sometimes we play with this myth: the fact that we decided to start the occupation of Palazzo Campana was in some way the game of referring to something, or even only of touching the heart of someone that was in Palazzo Campana and thus remembers the times of their youth.⁴²⁹ (I14)

The choice to occupy a building that is more relevant in public memory than for the daily life of the students, therefore, is mainly propagandistic: it is a way to gain more

⁴²⁹ 'Il '68 costituisce in qualche modo il mito fondativo del movimento studentesco in Italia, [...] e noi con questo mito ovviamente a volte ci giochiamo: il fatto che noi abbiamo deciso di far partire l'occupazione da Palazzo Campana, è anche un po' un gioco di richiamare o anche solo di intenerire il cuore di qualcuno che a Palazzo Campana c'era e che quindi si ricorda di quand'era giovane.'

public attention, to use the fame of the building and the saliency of 1968 in the Italian public sphere in order to obtain more media coverage and to conquer the sympathy of those that belong to the generation that occupied Palazzo Campana. But this is not all. The students, when they decided to occupy Palazzo Campana, were at a very peculiar stage of the cycle of protest: it was 17 November 2010, the Anomalous Wave against the budget cuts to education lasted until the autumn of 2008, and since the spring of 2010 students have been protesting against the new Gelmini reform. In addition to this there was a local struggle in Turin, with students asking for a more progressive distribution of tuition fees. Researchers have been refusing to give classes since September, and the students have already ‘symbolically occupied’ (the ‘symbolic occupation’ is typical of this cycle, and it consists of a temporary occupation of a building, usually with an assembly, without actually obstructing the activities, administrative or didactic, that takes normally place in the space) the rectorate and other buildings. But the parliamentary process of the reform is proceeding, the final vote is approaching, and activists need to take the next step, to make the students and the public feel the urgency of what is happening. It is in this context that the occupation of Palazzo Campana took place:

Exactly for this reason we chose something that forced our own tradition: [...] stopping the didactic activities, something that we absolutely opposed during the Wave and that in Turin had not been done since the times of the *Pantera*. And thus we decided to occupy Palazzo Campana, choosing it as a symbolic place, given that Palazzo Campana is the place from which 1968 started, and at the same time of stopping didactic activities, which was something quite hardcore.⁴³⁰(I14)

The choice of occupying Palazzo Campana coincides with the choice of radicalising the style of the protest, turning the ‘symbolic occupation’ into a real blockade of university activities. As we have seen in the first section, occupations were the practice most strongly associated with 1968: in this case, the choice to occupy a building that is a symbol of 1968 corresponds to the recuperation of a form of protest which is

⁴³⁰ ‘Proprio per quest’urgenza noi abbiamo fatto una forzatura rispetto alla nostra tradizione: [...] interrompere la didattica, cosa a cui noi durante l’Onda eravamo assolutamente contrari in ogni modo e che comunque a Torino non veniva fatta dai tempi della *Pantera*, e quindi abbiamo deciso di occupare Palazzo Campana, scegliendolo come luogo simbolico, visto che Palazzo Campana è il luogo in cui nacque il ’68, e quindi abbiamo scelto di occupare Palazzo Campana e di interrompere la didattica, ed è stata una cosa abbastanza tosta.’

considered typical of that cycle. It is a way to try and make the protest feel as relevant and historical as the one in 1968. As we have seen in the Chapter 6, escaping rituality, breaking the cycle of something that is expected to happen seasonally, is a frequent worry for Italian activists, especially when they feel that something important and urgent is happening in front of them. The association with 1968, which many times has accompanied the sense of rituality and seasonality of student mobilisations in Italy, is this time used to break that cycle and make this protest feel more unique.

In Spain, a relevant episode of appropriation of the memory of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s happens in the spring of 2012, triggered by the death of Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Francoist minister in the 1960s and 1970s, and, later among the founders of the conservative *Partido Popular* and President of Galicia from 1991 to 2006. Fraga was the living symbol of the continuity between the Francoist dictatorship and a significant part of the establishment of the new democratic regime, and the commemorations of his death were seen as a celebration of this continuity. It is in this context that students decide to try to appropriate and celebrate Fraga's opponents:

When Fraga died, everybody honoured Fraga, and there were some parts of the student movement that started honouring the students that died when Fraga was a minister⁴³¹. (E8)

In Contrapoder we decided to pay homage to the victims that died at the hands of the fascists in the 1970s, and in particular of a student of our department, who was murdered by a policeman during a demonstration, She was called Mari Luz Najera. We are trying to do this right now, one of the goals that my generation has chosen is the attempt to take all the memories of those struggles and bring them to the present. Since 2006 the debate on the historical memory of the Civil War and Francoism was opened again, we want to put it all together and say: 'We are the ones that you have been persecuting, that you have been murdering for many years'. In our democracy memory is very short, people like to forget and they forget above all when the power wants them to.⁴³² (E9)

⁴³¹ 'Cuando muere Fraga, todos homenajean a Fraga, y hay algunos sectores del movimiento estudiantil que se dedican a homenajear los estudiantes que murieron cuando Fraga era ministro.'

⁴³² 'En Contrapoder decidimos realizar un homenaje a las víctimas que murieron a mano de los fascistas en los años 70 y en particular una alumna de nuestra facultad que murió asesinada por un policía durante una manifestación, que se llamaba Mari Luz Najera. Intentamos ahora mismo, uno de los objetivos que se ha puesto mi generación es intentar recoger toda la memoria de estas luchas y llevarla al presente. Desde el año 2006 se abrió otra vez el debate de la memoria histórica de la guerra civil y del franquismo, queremos juntar todo eso y decir: "nosotros esos que vais persiguiendo, que vais asesinando desde un montón de años". En nuestra democracia la memoria es muy corta, a la gente le conviene olvidar y olvida cuando le apetece sobre todo a los poderes.'

In this case, compared to Italy, the choice is substantially less connected with the strategic development of the student cycle of protest, and more related with the cultural and political climate in which student activism takes place. The debate on memory that has been characterising Spain for the last 15 years seems to be gradually shifting from the Civil War to the dictatorship and the transition, with the complicity of the economic crisis, and student activists are expressing their voices in this debate, more than appropriating the memory of their anti-Francoist counterparts to strengthen the symbolic power of their struggle. Nevertheless, the faces of the young victims of Francoism that were stencilled on the walls of the department of political science of the Complutense, in Madrid, were drawn by activists whose politicisation, also on the issue of memory, happened in the student mobilisations of the last few years, and their choice to dedicate the walls of their university to young students who died fighting the dictatorship is not a coincidence. It is another part of the attempt to access the potential for legitimacy provided by the memory of the student opposition to Francoism, but this time it starts from the need to rescue a part of that memory, to recover in front of the public opinion the faces and the stories of anti-Francoist students, to build in the public sphere a relevant symbolic repertoire of memory.

Explicit constraints

In the following section (3) I will examine the cases in which activists find, in their field of action, explicit references to the past that constrain their possibility for collective action. In this case the strategic choices that movements have to make regards potential *compliance*: they can decide to comply or not with the symbolic constraints that the past presents.

3. Cultural traumas

The impact of memory on the strategic choices of movement actors should not be interpreted only in positive terms. As I have already mentioned, memories can structure the field of action of movement actors both as resources and as constraints. In particular, memory can establish taboos and proscriptions (Olick and Levy 1997) inside a specific community. The hardest taboos to break, in this sense, are local, and they are usually connected to some specific trauma that characterised a local field of action.

Neil Smelser's definition of cultural trauma, as amended by Ron Eyerman, defines it as 'a memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is (a) laden with negative affect, (b) represented as indelible, and (c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions or group's identity' (Smelser 2001:44, Eyerman 2001:2-3). This concept is most useful when used to explain the role of significant historical events, such as slavery in the American context (Eyerman 2001) or the Civil War in the Spanish one (Sánchez Mosquera 2008), when the group to which the trauma refers can be identified with a whole national society or some relevant component inside it. Relativising cultural trauma, identifying the borders of the social group for which a particular memory is traumatic and the relative levels of relevance that this memory occupies in respect to different social groups, is quite challenging and problematic. Nevertheless, the literature on cultural trauma is useful to show how a certain memory, if it gains a position of relevance in a public sphere, is able to shape the symbolic environment in which social actors are placed. The memory of certain events, narrated as being characterised by negative effects, an indelible nature and a capacity to violate a group's identity, can strongly contribute to setting symbolic limits and borders around a social actor. It can contribute to the establishment of certain prescriptions and proscriptions in a certain population, as Jeffrey Olick and Daniel Levy have shown in respect to the cultural constraints imposed by the memory of the Holocaust on German politics (Olick and Levy 1997).

The cases I am referring to in this section are far from being comparable with slavery, civil war and the holocaust, but they have assumed some of the main traits that characterise cultural trauma, if we define as the population of reference the leftist movement milieus in certain cities.

The first example is the 'Angelo Azzurro' fire in Turin, already mentioned in the previous chapter as one of the most traumatic events of the Italian youth mobilisation of 1977, for reasons connected both with the nature of the event (the accidental death of an innocent working-class student) and with its public representation (the picture of the dead body published in the press).

Such an event, as Monica Galfré explained, 'hushed the movement itself, marking a point of no return' (Galfré 2008: 129). This silence did not concern only the students of 1977. The persistence and reproduction, in the local public sphere, of this memory has strongly influenced and shaped the symbolic environment in which further activism

has taken place in Turin. In particular, it has had an effect on the level of violence tolerated by the local public opinion, which is traditionally considered a key element of the political opportunity structure every movement faces. It has been more difficult, for student activists in Turin, to raise the level of contention, as testified vividly by the interviewee I previously quoted. This does not mean that compliance is necessary: in the previous chapter, I quoted a Turin-based activist, belonging to a radical autonomous social centre, explicitly identifying with the memory of 1977. Once again: memory produces strategic dilemmas to activists, contributing in structuring their field of action. Another example comes from Seville: many activists (E12, E14) told me the story of a student that, in order to break into an office during an occupation, in the context of the struggle against the LOU in 2002, destroyed a door with an axe, causing damage to a valuable university property and harming the whole occupation. Even if the episode is far from being comparable with the ‘Angelo Azzurro’ fire as a tragedy, it had similar effects in imposing proscriptions to the repertoire of contention used by student activists in Seville: the story is told and retold every time someone proposes using a more radical form of protest, as an example of how one poorly planned radical action can hinder the efficacy of the movement as a whole. Therefore, contemporary student activists in Seville, when evaluating their alternatives and making strategic choices, have to take into account that the local field of action in which they are situated is path-dependent, and that limits have been established by previous experiences.

These are only two examples of a quite significant phenomenon, that strongly resonates both with the literature on cultural trauma and with Olick and Levy’s consideration on the prescriptive and proscriptive capacity of collective memory. In this case, a particularly morbid picture from a violent event of 1977, or a curious anecdote from 2002, are able to play a relevant role in setting the limits of the repertoire of contention in 2014. This does not mean that Turin and Seville are condemned to respect these limits for ever, given that ‘the relationship between remembered pasts and constructed presents is one of perpetual but differentiated constraint and renegotiation over time, rather than pure strategic invention in the present or fidelity to (or inability to escape from) a monolithic legacy’ (Olick and Levy 1997:934). Nevertheless, remembered violence is significantly impacting contemporary mobilisation, acting as a quite effective proscription device, able to establish taboos that activists know they have to respect when protesting in the street if they do not want to completely alienate public opinion.

Implicit resources

In the following paragraphs I will examine the cases in which activists find, in their field of action, implicit references to the past, that they can choose to use or not as a resource. In this case the strategic choice that movements have to make regards potential *replication*: they can decide to replicate or not the use of a symbolic resource coming from the past.

4. Knowing the textbook and learning from it

This kind of reference to the past that activists have to take into account in their strategic choices includes elements that are not explicitly related to the narratives of the 1960s and 1970s reproduced in the public memory, but rather with the legacy of the past on every actors' identity, with the representations and self-representations of political actors as they have been produced through history, with canonical and routinised repertoires and 'ways of doing things'. I have already referred to the 'textbook of student mobilisation', that is, the set of unwritten rules that regulate activity in mobilised universities.

Knowing the 'textbook', and learning from it, provides resources. Activists gradually learn 'how things work', and what the structural dynamics of mobilisation are. They almost develop their own kind of 'social movement studies', with its own jargon and some shared assumptions. The people that know the textbook well can play a more significant role in mobilisation, as this Neapolitan activist explains in reference to the period immediately following the peak of mobilisation in the autumn of 2008:

I come from a more trained experience, therefore I knew the low phases of the movement, I knew that there are moments in which you're five and others in which you're fifty thousand. Instead, those whose experience of militancy was only in the context of the Wave, had huge trouble in adapting. You started with the university on fire, and then you have to go back to a collective of ten people, it's depressing.⁴³³ (I11)

⁴³³ 'Io venivo da un'esperienza più formata, quindi conoscevo le "basse" del movimento, so che ci sono momenti in cui sei in 5 e momenti in cui sei in 50 mila. Chi invece ha vissuto tutta la sua esperienza di militanza dentro lo spazio dell'Onda ha avuto proprio delle difficoltà enormi ad adattarsi. Sei partito che

Those who know the rules teach them to the others. But the reference to the past remains always implicit, unlike in previously cited cases. Activists know that these rules come from somewhere, but there is no reference to an explicit past. Students are aware that these rules have been ‘inherited’, but they are not sure from whom. Most of the time, these routinised and ritualised practices are cited with a positive connotation, as repertoires of action on which activists can draw, as cognitive shortcuts to offer *prêt-à-porter* solutions to the problems they face. An activist based in the University of Seville illustrates well the dynamic:

The repertoire is in the collective imagination, it is made by things you inherit. The veterans are the one who proposed ‘we have to occupy’, that is what has always been done. People become trained to do mobilisations, to do occupations.⁴³⁴ (E12)

On the other hand, I have already quoted many activists complaining about the ritualised nature of student mobilisation: from this point of view, every example of tactical innovation is a case of non-replication of implicit mnemonic resources.

Implicit constraints

In the following paragraph (5) I will examine the cases in which activists find, in their field of action, implicit references to the past, that constrain their possibility for collective action. In this case the strategic choice that movements have to make is on potential *obedience*: they can decide to obey or not the symbolic constraints coming from the past.

5. No trespassing: historical taboos, inherited proscriptions and metonymies

The existence of a set of unwritten rules that regulate activity in mobilised universities implies the problems connected with obeying (or not obeying) these rules. There is a

avevi l’università in fiamme e devi tornare a fare il collettivo in 10, deprimente.’

⁴³⁴ ‘El repertorio está en el imaginario colectivo, son cosas que se heredan. La gente antigua es un poco la que plantea “se tiene que hacer un encierro”, que es lo que siempre se ha hecho, la gente se educa a hacer movilizaciones, haber encierros.’

strong path-dependency, in a landscape populated by movement areas that have been developing and sharing a certain way of doing things. A good example is the so-called *pregiudiziale antifascista* (the ‘anti-Fascist precondition’) that forbids sharing political actions, like a demonstration, with far right groups. An Italian activist mentions the episode of Piazza Navona (where, in the autumn of 2008, neofascist student groups tried to join a school student demonstration and were chased away by university students), saying that ‘the debate on the fact whether *fasci* could be there or not, in respect to debates of the past, was already settled’ (I2). There is a ‘way of doing things’ that establishes the taboo of cooperating with far right groups. But this ‘way of doing things’ is not automatically shared by all the students participating in the mobilisation, at least at the beginning of the cycle of protest: there is a long process of learning and training, in which, once more, political groups and movement areas are the bearers of the legacy of the past.

However, most taboos and proscriptions are related to the repertoire of contention. The same Italian activist, for example, said that ‘blocking the didactic activities was politically difficult, in respect to previous experiences’ (I2). In fact, I have already explained how the occupation of Palazzo Campana, in Turin, obstructing the classes, was supposed to represent a break in the normal ‘way of doing things’. But it has to be underlined that this normality did not come from nothing, but was the product of ‘previous experiences’ that shaped what followed in a path-dependency process.

Sometimes these taboos act as *metonymies*, as ‘things that stand for other things’ (Polletta 2006: 56): a simple strategic choice, in a particular context, for some actors that are influenced by a certain past can assume broader meanings. This is the case of many choices that are related to the repertoire of contention: the choice of a form of action is often a metonymy for the radicality or moderation of a certain political group. Therefore, certain choices regarding forms of action are deeply influenced by the legacy of the past and its relationship with a group’s identity. There might even be a conflict between the strategic evaluation of a certain form and its identity-related connotations. Sometimes, these conflicts are resolved with a separation between what can be discussed publicly and what can be said only in private

Some more central issues, for examples how do you behave in front of a possible blockade [by the police], or how you raise the level of violence you need to put in place, they are elements that take into account a historical path that everyone has followed, and in fact

they are discussed in contexts that are very narrow, while the public level of discussion of forms of action remains anchored to a debate that is instrumental, in which very few are willing to be called into question. The steps forward and the choice to call something into question are made at a level that is not public.⁴³⁵ (17)

This activist, in Rome, is referring in particular to the debates that followed the already mentioned demonstration of December 14th 2010, and to the attitude of activists belonging to the post-autonomous area: since the choice of a form of action is a metonymy for radicality, and their ‘historical path’ links their identity to radical forms of action, they cannot make an explicit critique of the violent clashes with the police of December 14th, and they cannot publicly propose to decrease the level of contention for the following demonstration of December 22, even if they consider it strategically useful, because it would threaten their inherited identity. They can do so, but ‘not on a public level’.

Memory work and identity work

6. Born this way: the groups’ given identities and the curse of history

In Chapter 7 we have seen how genealogies often coincide with definitions and identities, especially in the accounts by Italian activists. As Stuart Hall pointed out:

Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (Hall 1990: 225)

In particular, activists tend to explain the current differences and divisions between different political groups and movement areas through their ‘histories’ and ‘political cultures’. Political groups and movement areas are described as the result of long trajectories that still shape and influence their action. In the phases of ‘latency’,

⁴³⁵ ‘Alcune questioni più centrali, ad esempio come ci si comporta rispetto a un eventuale blocco, o come si alza il livello di anche violenza che si mette in campo è un elemento che tiene conto anche di un percorso storico che tutti hanno fatto, e infatti viene discusso in livelli molto stretti, mentre il livello pubblico di discussione sulle pratiche rimane ancorato a un dibattito presentato in maniera molto strumentale, sul quale pochi sono disposti a mettersi in discussione. I passi in avanti e le messe in discussione si fanno su un livello non pubblico.’

differences reach their apex, while in phases of 'visibility' (Melucci 1989: 70), in the context of mobilisation, groups have to come to terms with each other and with the unpoliticised (or underpoliticised in respect to the groups' militants).

This mechanism is well explained by an activist in Barcelona, who, when asked about the reasons for the differences between the different groups, in the debates on the forms of protest, answered that 'it reflected everyone's origin and their political families',⁴³⁶ but then added that these debates regarded only the most militant part of the movement, and did not involve most of the individual students who joined the protest without participating in one of the movement areas, 'people who don't consider history as their whole life' ⁴³⁷(E20).

The most common description of the movement, in fact, is based on the different political groups, bearing different identities derived from their histories, who participate in common spaces together with individual students who do not belong to any group of area. The double structure of the movement, with different levels of visibility and legitimacy in different contexts, is acknowledged by all the activists I interviewed: even in the most assembly-based movement, everybody, among the most militant core of the mobilisation, knows that there are groups and areas, the identities of which have to be taken into account.

These identities, as we have seen in Chapter 7, are usually interpreted as the product of histories: once again, groups and areas are the bearers of the past, engaging in a dialectic relationship with individual unpoliticised students, who live in the present. The movement *in se* is almost always represented by activists as being incapable of remembering, while the real actors of commemoration are political groups and areas. In particular, movement areas are seen as the bearers of heavy traditions and histories, the weight of which produces tensions and divisions in the movement.

When I asked about where the differences and tensions between groups came from, an activist in Rome told me that 'the difference between the groups comes from a long-term political culture' (I7). A similar attitude, even with a direct reference to the 1970s, was expressed by an activist from a totally different area, Florence:

All the history of what the movement has been in Florence continues to have a role. I see the movement in Florence as a blocked movement, because it suffers a lot from

⁴³⁶ 'Esto respondía a de donde viene cada una y que familia política le ampara'.

⁴³⁷ 'Gente que la historia no es su vida'.

fragmentation in groups. [...] There is a very strong prejudice, that at the end of the day comes from the 1970s, from the cleavages of then, that are reproduced, with the difference that the cleavages of the 1970s were big, every group had a huge roots in the local context, while now it seems like we're splitting the atom, and therefore you end up with a completely fragmented movement.⁴³⁸ (I19)

Other than divisions, movement areas are also identified as responsible for conservation in general, perpetuating local traditions the end up blocking, or, anyway threatening the recruitment potential of the student movement. Another activist in Florence, for example, identified in movement areas the actors guilty of reproducing the culture of isolation and refusal to build relationships at the national level, which is supposed to traditionally characterise Florence.

Similar references are present, even if in a slightly lighter way, in the Spanish context. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the heritage of the student mobilisations of the past is significantly less powerful, from a symbolic point of view, in the Spanish public discourse, and consequently in the contemporary movement. Nevertheless, in many activists there is the feeling that movement areas tend to cause the movement tensions, divisions and bad habits coming from the past:

It is quite difficult for positive things to get transmitted. It is more likely that slanders and bad histories are reproduced than the good ones. We do not pass over good practices, but vicious practices, resentments of the past without any sense anymore. We should have brought our corpses away with us.⁴³⁹ (E18)

The objects of this consideration are older and more experienced activists, but, as we have seen in the previous chapter, they very often tend to coincide with the most politicised activists, member of movement areas. But this quote is particularly interesting because it makes explicit, particularly with the use of the first person, a

⁴³⁸ 'Poi tutta la storia di quello che è stato il movimento a Firenze continua ad avere un ruolo. Io il movimento a Firenze lo vedo come un movimento bloccato, perché soffre tantissimo della parcellizzazione in gruppi [...] c'è un pregiudizio fortissimo che è fondamentalmente un pregiudizio storico, che viene di fondo dagli anni '70, dalle spaccature di allora, che si riproducono, con la differenza che le spaccature degli anni '70 erano grosse, ogni gruppo aveva un radicamento territoriale enorme, oggi è più una questione di scissione dell'atomo, e quindi alla fine hai un movimento completamente parcellizzato.'

⁴³⁹ '[C]uesta mucho que se pasen las cosas positivas. Corren mas los malos bulos, la malas historias, que las buenas. No nos pasamos buenas practicas, mas practicas viciadas, rencores pasados sin mas sentido ya. Teníamos que habernos llevado nuestro cadáveres.'

paradoxical element that was also present in the statement made by Italian activists: these people, who are strongly criticising the negative role played by movement areas in dropping on the movement tensions and differences that do not concern the majority of the students participating in the assemblies, are, in most cases, very relevant members of movement areas.

This exercise of reflexivity has two explanations: on the one hand, everyone, when they are blaming political groups for this effect, is thinking about someone else and not about their own role; on the other hand, there is, at least partially, a consciousness that this is a structural element of the mobilisation, something that is inherently part of the handbook we have already mentioned. The presence of organised groups will structurally produce these effects, willingly or not.

This does not mean that activists take this conservative role of movement areas for granted and that they do not reflect on how to deal with it. There are some attempts, at least on the discursive level, at active work on this issue. For example, an activist from Rome sees significant progress, to this end, in the progressive increase of the visibility of student groups in the protests of 2010, as a breach of the hypocritical attempts to hide their existence in the Wave of 2008:

In 2008 there was almost the fear of declaring to belong to a group. All this fell down like a sand castle because students are not stupid, they realised it, and in 2008 it created problems, because students felt cheated, because some of them started asking 'What's happening? Why are there those groups fighting with each other? Why are the groups always the same?'. In 2010, remembering this, AIR was known, Link was known, Unicommon/Uniriot was known, and things got better, because it was clear that there were organised actors, but the decision-making spaces of the movement were in the assemblies, and there was a more genuine relationship both among organisations and between organisations and the movement.⁴⁴⁰ (14)

⁴⁴⁰ 'Nel 2008 c'era quasi il timore di dichiararsi appartenere a una struttura. Tutto questo è caduto come un castello di sabbia, perché gli studenti non sono stupidi, se ne sono accorti, e nel 2008 ha prodotto problemi, perché spesso si sono sentiti anche presi in giro, perché quando ci sono cominciati a essere degli scazzi, gli studenti si chiedevano "ma che sta succedendo? Perché ci sono quei gruppi che discutono e litigano tra loro? Perché i gruppi sono sempre gli stessi?". Nel 2010, memori di quello che era stato nel 2008, AIR si conosceva, Link si conosceva, Unicommon/Uniriot si conosceva, e le cose sono andate meglio, perché era palese che ci fossero delle realtà organizzate, però i luoghi decisionali del movimento fossero le assemblee, c'era un rapporto più genuino sia tra le organizzazioni sia nel rapporto tra organizzazioni e movimento.'

The problem of getting organised groups and assemblies to work together is present also in the Spanish context, in particular in Barcelona, where various attempts at coordination, in the last few years, have seen the coexistence of different levels and models of democratic participation. What is interesting for the purposes of this research, anyway, is not the presence of mechanisms of interaction between groups and assemblies, but the symbolic role of bearers of the past that groups tend to assume, while depoliticised students in the assemblies are seen and described as the heralds of purity from ideology and newness. From this quote, a more nuanced and dynamic representation seems to emerge, able to account, at least partially, for the complex and dialectic interactions that produce unity and innovation in a movement. It is through political and cultural work on their identities and memories, through challenging them and letting the experiences of mobilisation change them and shape them, that new identities, more favourable for the coalitional process, are produced. Paradoxically, if organised groups are the ones who bring to the movement inherited divisions and heavy legacies, it is up to them to do the necessary work to reshape this heritage in the common experience with other groups and with individual student activists. It is through such processes, as we will see later, that innovation, in symbols and practices, is produced.

7. Memory work and memory at work: dealing with inherited identities in the context of mobilisation

The previous section might suggest a sense of determinism, as if path-dependencies, inherited taboos and identities were a prison from which activists cannot escape. This is not the case. Treating culture (in this case, memory) as a structure, does not imply the impossibility of agency (Polletta 2004). On the contrary, the observation of the challenges posed by the weight of the past to collective action makes the issue of how movements face these challenges become central. In sections 1 and 2 I have already showed how movements can take on an active role in reacting to memory-related problems and in using memory strategically, when dealing with explicit comparison between the past and the present. In this section I will present a similar exercise, but this time related to the topic of this chapter: the role of legacies and inherited identities in collective action. How do activists handle the problems related to the symbolic apparatus they identify with? How do different historically produced identities relate to each other? How do embedded identities impact on coalitional work in the movement?

8. Limited apostasy: downplaying identity

The clearest example of strategic work related to identity is the set of communicative choices related to the symbolic core of a group's identity. I will start with a short anecdote I was told by an activist in Turin:

When I arrived in the CUA⁴⁴¹, when we made banners, we often signed it with the sickle and hammer. Then, in the collective, we started questioning ourselves about the communicative level that was most useful. Without any doubt the Wave broke something, from the communicative point of view. [...] That language, that communication, the sickle and hammer, we stopped using it in those years, because it did not make sense anymore to go on insisting on something that without any doubt was important from the point of view of identity, but that was not fruitful anymore from the political point of view.⁴⁴² (I15)

A symbol, strongly related with the identity of the group as it has been developing for decades, becomes problematic because it risks threatening the capacity of the group to reach the wide audience to which it aspires at a certain point of the cycle of protest. This is not an unknown phenomenon in the literature on social movements: James Jasper has talked about an 'extension dilemma' (Jasper 2004), Marwell and Oliver about the issue of reaching a balance between reach and selectivity (Marwell and Oliver 1993: 157–79), and Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani about 'how to define identity to include as many people as possible in a movement's potential constituency, while continuing to provide strong incentives to the movement's core supporters'. (della Porta and Diani 2006: 102-103). A very similar example is visible also in an example provided by an activist in Madrid. Once again, it is the heavy heritage of the communist tradition, so central in the history of European social movements, that is object of identity work:

We did not want a traditional organisation anymore, we did not feel at ease in an organisation called 'Karl Marx', we were interested in what was happening in

⁴⁴¹ *Collettivo Universitario Autonomo* ('Autonomous University Collective'), Turin-based student group, close to the autonomous occupied social centre *Askatasuna*.

⁴⁴² 'Quando sono arrivato al Cua, quando si facevano gli striscioni, spesso nella firma c'era anche la falce e martello, poi dentro il collettivo ci si è iniziati a interrogare su quel livello comunicativo, se fosse utile mantenerlo. L'onda indubbiamente da un punto di vista comunicativo quella roba lì la rompe. [...] Quel linguaggio lì, quella comunicazione lì della falce e martello noi la smettemmo in quegli anni soprattutto, perché non aveva alcun senso continuare a insistere su una cosa che indubbiamente da un punto di vista identitario era importante, ma non era fruttifera da un punto di vista politico.'

altermundialismo, that felt a bit fresher, less traditional, they did not speak to you as a worker, or as a future proletarian, but as a citizen, or something like that.⁴⁴³ (E4)

What is described in these quotations is a collective choice by a group of people: in the Italian case, it is an organised political collective that decides to abandon a certain symbolic repertoire, while in the Spanish case there is a group of activists leaving an organisation characterised by a traditional symbolic repertoire and looking for something different. But in both cases there is a group of students, characterised by a shared political activity, deciding to abandon the public display of traditional symbols inherited from the past.

These examples suggest that for activists, paraphrasing Gramsci, the old world must die away in order to let the new one come forth. Renouncing symbols that are strongly embedded in the identity of a group, inherited from history, like the sickle and hammer or the name of Karl Marx, can be instrumental in the process of widening the audience that the group addresses. In fact, symbols inherited from the past are often seen as a source of pride and sense of belonging for group members, and as potential obstacles for the access to the group's activities by bystanders, or, in general, by people that might be interested in the proposals and actions of the groups without sharing the ideological background of group members and adhering to its political tradition. Among activists there is a widespread knowledge about the existing trade-off between, on the one hand, maintaining and reproducing traditional symbolical elements in order to publicly reinstate the identity of the group and, on the other hand, renouncing them or at least downplaying their role, in order to construct a public representation of the group that might be more appealing to less politicised people.

Two elements of this process need to be pointed out: on the one hand, the strategic use of identity, with the peculiar relationship between identity work and memory work; on the other hand, the particular moment of the development of a wave of mobilisation in which the examples I cited took place, with the reciprocal interaction between movement context and groups' agency.

First, these examples highlight a certain strategic use of identity, or, more precisely, an active work on certain constituting elements of an actor's identity in order to produce

⁴⁴³ '[N]o queríamos una organización de tipo mas tradicional, no nos sentíamos cómodos en una organización llamada Carlos Marx, nos interesaba la ola esta que estaba habiendo de altermundialismo, que era un poco mas fresca, menos tradicional, no te hablaban como obrero, o come trabajador, o como futuro proletario, sino te hablaba en términos mas ciudadanista, o cosas así.'

effects on the public sphere. Identity, in this sense, is something on which actors retain some sort of control, at least in terms of its publicly displayed components. But its publicly displayed components are a substantial part of collective identity, as William Gamson explained: ‘the locus of collective identity [...] is at the sociocultural, not the individual, level. It is manifested through the language and symbols by which it is publicly expressed – in styles of dress, language, demeanor, and discourse. One learns about its content by asking people about the meaning of labels and other cultural symbols, not about their own personal identity’ (Gamson 1995:100). In this sense, working and strategising on the public display of the identity of a group means working and strategising on the collective identity of the group, or at least on its substantial component, which is the one situated in the public sphere and presented to potential activists, allies, opponents or bystanders. Furthermore, the examples I have cited refer to a layer of collective identity that is different from the one on which the scholarship has traditionally focused. In fact, the literature on social movements that has referred to the ‘strategic use of identity’ (Bernstein 1997) and to ‘identity work’ (Snow and McAdam 2000) has mainly focused on the deployment of personal identity in the public sphere as a movement strategy or on the attempts to align individual and movement identity. Instead, the examples I have provided refer to what Gamson has defined as the organisational layer of collective identity, the one ‘built around movement carriers - the union maid or the party loyalists’, in a typology that included also the movement layer, ‘broader than any particular organisation’ and the solidary group layer, ‘constructed around people's social location – for example, as workers or as black women’ (Gamson 1995:100).

Identity work at the organisational layer of collective identity has seldom been the object of deep analysis in social movement studies, although it is nevertheless instrumental for the process of coalition building that I have already mentioned. And in the cases I have analysed, identity work relies for a very significant part on memory work. If groups' identities are inherited and they coincide, or at least significantly overlap, with histories and political traditions, to conduct identity work on the organisational layer of collective identity means to strategise on memory, to work on the symbolic material inherited from the past. Identity is an object of strategic choice, and memory work constitutes a significant part of identity work, at least as far as the organisational layer of collective identity is concerned.

The second element that needs to be underlined in this process is its relationship with the stages of development of the cycle of protest. Both references, in fact, are temporally situated in a phase of emergence of a massive mobilisation. The Italian quote explicitly identifies the connection between the decision to abandon the sickle and hammer and the experience of the *Onda Anomala*. It seems that there is a visible correspondence between the choice of downplaying a group's identity, in particular in its most heavily past-informed components, and the emergence of a massive mobilisation. This phenomenon has not been analysed by the scholars who have worked on the relationship between identity work and the life course of a movement, which has usually focused, as I explained before, on the alignment and aggregation of individual identities in movement identities, overlooking the organisational layer. More precisely, social movement scholars generally tend to look at the story of the emergence of a movement from the point of view of the movement itself, and not from that of people who had already been active in a certain milieu and that live the movement as something that happens in their field of action, a phase in a long trajectory of activism. Looking at the same phenomenon from different points of view can bring different conclusions: for example, when Snow and McAdam describe the fundamental role of black churches in the emergence of the civil rights movement in the US in the 1960s, they underline the role of already existing infrastructures for the development of the movement, refusing the myths of immaculate conception, but they look at this process from the point of view of the movement, rather than from that of the black churches. They describe this as an 'identity appropriation process', in which the movement 'was able to appropriate the shared identity of church members and use it as the motivational impetus for protest activity' (Snow and McAdam 2000:56). But to what extent can a collective identity, at the organisational layer, be appropriated by a movement without undergoing a transformation process, or at least a transformation in its public deployment? I lack the empirical knowledge to understand whether the black churches that provided organisational resources in the first stage of the civil rights movement took the strategic choice to downplay their identity. But there are instances of such choices in the cases that are the object of this work. The temporal correspondence between this process and the emergence of a wave of mobilisation can be understood by two different points of view, placing agency on the side of the political groups or on the side of the movement: on the one hand, the choice by a political group to downplay its own identity, or at least its heaviest inherited traits, facilitates the coalition-building

mechanisms that are instrumental in the development of the movement; on the other hand, it is because of the existence of an audience of potential activists, that participate in the movement without a particularly high level of politicisation and without adhering to any political traditions, that political groups have incentives to downplay their identity. It is quite difficult in this context to understand to what extent this dynamic weighs more on one side or on the other, but it is reasonable to argue that both mechanisms play a role in this process: it is the conscious choice by political groups to downplay their inherited identities (that have been described as a reason for divisions in the movement in the previous sections) in order to facilitate the construction of a movement coalition, but it is the presence of unpoliticised potential activists expected to provide the critical mass for the movement that incentivises the groups to act in this way.

9. Unity and innovation in the emergence of mobilisation

The first component of this dynamic, the necessity to downplay inherited identities in order to build a movement coalition, is well described by very similar accounts of the beginning of the *Onda Anomala* by two students participating in two different political groups in Pisa. Both of them describe Pisa as a local field of action characterised by long-standing political areas, significantly different and far from each other, that went through a process in which their differences were significantly reduced, facilitating the coalition-building work. The narrative is very similar: groups carry the weight of the past, which divides them, but they are able to partially free themselves from it in correspondence with the development of a united movement. How is this change explained by activists? How does this dynamic work? To what extent is agency on the side of groups that, through identity work, create the conditions for coalition-building, and, thus, for the development of the movement, and to what extent, instead, it is on the side of the movement, that, through providing a set of shared experiences among activists participating in different political areas and even in none of them, produces a movement layer of collective identity that, in turn, reshapes organisational layers? Activists' accounts provide material for both processes:

Pisa is a very peculiar city, from the point of view of movement history. Pisa is a city that has this very strong antagonistic root, that is present in various situations [...] We found

ourselves in a situation with three very different actors (the coordination of the collectives, the antagonists, and *Sinistra Per*), but gradually they moved in a uniform direction in a positive way.⁴⁴⁴ 120

In the history of Pisa, like, I think, in other university cities in the red regions, there was a high level of contrast, with on the one hand those near to the radical left [...] and the DS⁴⁴⁵, and the world that was in the middle was completely crushed. [...] Then what happened was that some new people arrived.⁴⁴⁶ (16)

The first account focuses on the alignment of group identities through the coalitional work in the movement, stressing how the movement experiences favour convergences between the inherited identities of political groups. The second, on the other hand, points to the relevance of the processes of innovation that happen inside the organised groups, freeing them from the weight of inherited identities.

Two quotations by activists based in Rome, once again belonging to different groups, provide a similar two-sided description of the processes of identity convergence in the movement. The first account is a description, proposed by a member of the student union area, of the process that started Uniriot, the university network built by activists of post-autonomous social centres, as a process of change and radical innovation in the context of the autonomous and social centre scene:

They made a big investment in the field of knowledge and education, they experimented in the university with a new way of reclaiming the city, building an imagination quite different from the one of the past, they tried to reinvent the Autonomy of the 1970s in a totally different key, transforming it from a theory on illegality to a permanent practice of everyday life became an attempt at building counter-power in the universities.⁴⁴⁷ (11)

⁴⁴⁴ 'Pisa è una città molto particolare, a livello di storia di movimento, Pisa è una città che a livello di movimento ha questa radice fortissima di natura antagonista, che è radicata in varie situazioni, [...] Ci troviamo perciò in una situazione con tre soggetti molto diversi (il coordinamento dei collettivi, gli antagonisti e Sinistra Per) che lentamente vanno però a uniformarsi in modo virtuoso.'

⁴⁴⁵ *Democratici di Sinistra*, Left Democrats, social-democratic party.

⁴⁴⁶ 'La storia di Pisa è la storia, come credo in altre città universitarie nelle regioni rosse, in cui c'è stato un livello di contrapposizione tra da una parte quello che risponde alla sinistra radicale [...] poi c'erano i Ds, e quel mondo che stava nel mezzo era completamente schiacciato. [...] Poi è successo che è arrivato un po' di gente nuova.'

⁴⁴⁷ 'Hanno fatto un fortissimo investimento sul terreno della conoscenza o delle conoscenze, hanno sperimentato non solo all'interno dell'università un terreno nuovo di riappropriazione della città, di costruzione anche di un immaginario differente rispetto a quello che era il passato, e hanno provato a reinventare l'autonomia di massa degli anni '70 in una chiave totalmente nuova, che da un ragionamento puro sull'illegalità come pratica continua all'interno della vita di tutti i giorni, di come andare invece a costruire contropotere all'interno degli atenei, giusto per rendere l'idea.'

That point of view is interesting: an activist from a different group sees the choice by a group to radically innovate in respect to their history as a fundamental step forward in the development of the movement. It is because they made that choice to ‘reinvent’ themselves, the activists said, that it became possible to cooperate. Transforming a group's identity, downplaying its heaviest inherited traits, favours the possibility of coalition building. Another activist, belonging to the Trotskyist area, proposes a broader account of the development of collective identities at the organisational layer during different stages of the mobilisation:

There are three organised areas inside the Sapienza University. [...] The movement was born in a phase in which these three different organisations had great difficulties in talking to each other. There was, let's say it like this, a non-belligerence pact at the beginning of the mobilisation, because we understood that we had in our hands something huge. The explosiveness of the Wave [...] had made it so that we had found a *modus operandi* among the various student organisations, even if it was clear that the identity and ideology-based elements we brought to the assemblies were strong, and sometimes impossible to reconcile with each other. Then, by working together it became possible to have a common discourse, which in 2008 would not have been possible.⁴⁴⁸ (I4)

The narrative is clear: there is a pre-movement situation in which the inherited identities of the different groups make every relationship between them difficult; then there is the emergence of a massive mobilisation, and, in order to exploit the situation, the groups agree partially to leave aside the reciprocally problematic elements of their identities; in the beginning, these problematic identity elements appear in the assemblies, but in time, during the mobilisation, the habit of working together develops into a movement layer of collective identity, shared by everyone.

To sum up, a negative correspondence between the development of a wave of mobilisation and the presence of strong group identities inherited from the past clearly emerges from the accounts of many activists: the mobilisation tends to develop in

⁴⁴⁸ ‘Sono tre le aree presenti e organizzate all'interno della Sapienza.[...] Il movimento è nato in una fase in cui queste tre organizzazioni avevano una grossa difficoltà a parlarsi, a relazionarsi. Ci fu un patto diciamo così di non belligeranza all'inizio del movimento, perché avevamo capito che avevamo tra le mani una cosa enorme. L'esplosività dell'Onda [...] ha fatto sì che si trovasse un *modus operandi* tra le varie organizzazioni studentesche, anche se era chiaro che gli elementi identitari e ideologici che portavamo nelle assemblee erano forti e spesso incomunicanti tra loro. Poi il lavorare insieme ha prodotto il fatto che si potessero fare discorsi comuni che nel 2008 non erano possibili.’

correspondence to the innovation inside the groups that favour the downplaying of inherited identities, and, in turn, the participation in the movement favours the convergence of organisational identities, with the marginalisation of their most problematic elements. This negative correspondence is articulated in various micro-processes, characterised by different levels of agency by the activists: generational changes inside the groups, conscious choices of downplaying identities, coalitional pacts in response to the incentive of broadening the common field of action, practices of common work that produce shared identities, etc.

10. Sweet weight: the limits of apostasy and the choice of compliance

These considerations should not lead to the ingenuous notion that the organisational layer of collective identities (i.e. the publicly displayed identities of collective political actors) is *in se* an obstacle for collective action. I am observing dynamics of mitigation of some identity-related symbolic elements inherited from the past in the coalitional work between political actors in the context of social mobilisation. This does not mean that the choice of downplaying a group's identity is the magic formula for a successful mobilisation, or that political actors systematically tend to adopt it. As I have already pointed out, strategic choices are culturally informed and are deeply conditioned by collective identity. Strategic choices for activists are debates on 'how to balance their beliefs about what is possible with their views on what matters, what compromises are acceptable, and who they are (their collective identity)' (Whittier 2002: 299). Also in this case, the connection between memory and identity is quite direct, since, as we have already seen, activists tend to identify the organisational layer of collective identity with the historical trajectory of the collective in which they participate. Memory work is translated into identity work, and identity work acts on material coming from the past. The strategic choice of renouncing or downplaying elements coming from the past has to be weighed against the symbolic and emotional power of feeling part of a long and controversial history. Interesting, from this point of view, is the development of the train of thought of a student activist of a social centre in Padua, the same person whose description of the weight of the past of the 1970s constraining present activism was quoted in a previous section.

If you go to ask these people sitting at the next table in the bar what *Autonomia Operaia*

was, they don't know it, they'll ask you 'what was it, a factory?' It is the good thing about history, well, it isn't good that there is ignorance, I'm not saying this, but it is a topic that is good to discuss in a bar, while in assemblies nobody is interested in your history, in the historical group you come from. Militants are curious, I still don't know some things, on the one hand it is right that I don't know them, on the other hand I'd always like to know more. This is the good of Padua, the mystery of Padua of the 1970s, there aren't many written documents. [...] The comrades never talked, unlike the Milanese and the Romans who wrote books and never did anything anymore. Here in Padua some people remained, but they went on doing things, they did not start writing books. [...] it is a style of militancy, a discretion I've always liked very much: you do things, you shut up, and let's leave the glorification to others⁴⁴⁹. (19)

The first part resonates with his ideas in the previous section and with what I have been arguing in the last few paragraphs: the presence of the past is problematic, and the activist praises the blissful ignorance of unpoliticised students, free from the weight of memory. But then, when he starts looking at the topic from the point of view of the militant, that it is its own point of view, the picture changes: he is disappointed about not knowing enough about the history of the *Autonomia*, and he ascribes the lack of sources on the topic to the discretion of the militants. 'They have never spoken', he says with pride, they did not cave in front of the police or of the judges, and, unlike in other cities, they went on, they gave continuity to the organisation, they did not turn into narrators of the 1970s but they went on being protagonists of the changing times. A few lines after expressing his fatigue and boredom with the heavy presence of the memory of the 1970s, after describing (in the lines reported in the previous sections) how difficult it is to conduct political activity with the label of being the heir of the *Autonomia* of the 1970s, he displays an undeniable feeling of pride about carrying that label. The contradiction is as evident as it is interesting: what the activist perceives as a limit for the relationship with bystanders, or even unpoliticised students in assemblies,

⁴⁴⁹ 'Se tu vai a chiedere a questi qua in fianco a noi seduti al tavolo al bar chi era Autonomia Operaia non sanno, ti chiedono cos'era, una fabbrica? È il bello della storia, cioè non è bello che ci sia l'ignoranza, per carità, però è un tema che è bello da discutere al bar, ma nelle assemblee questo clima relativo al fatto che tu vieni da un determinato gruppo storico, alla gente non interessa la tua storia. I militanti son curiosi, io ancora non so determinate cose, come da una parte è giusto che sia, dall'altra vorrei sapere sempre di più. Purtroppo il bello anche di Padova, il mistero di Padova degli anni '70, c'è anche poca documentazione scritta, [...] però i compagni non hanno mai parlato, a differenza di libri che hanno scritto i militanti milanesi e romani che dopo non hanno più fatto un cazzo. Qua a Padova qualcuno è rimasto ancora e però continua a far le robe, non è che si sia messo a scrivere libri. [...] È uno stile di militanza, una discrezione che è a me è sempre piaciuto molto, far le robe, tasere, l'esaltazione la lasciamo fare ad altri.'

he feels as a resource in his own personal experience of militancy. The sense of proud belonging that he expresses, identifying himself with a long itinerary of struggle, with a previous generation of militants who lived through an intense phase of mobilisation and repression and who carried on, is a powerful resource in sustaining mobilisation and in ensuring loyalty. The trade-off between the external political opportunities and the internal feeling of pride and belonging is a strategic dilemma he faces in his political activity inside the movement, and this explains why the choice of innovation and transformation of inherited identities is so eventful, as the previous analysis shows.

Furthermore, this quotation includes a reference that resonates quite strongly with the words of another activist of the social centre area, in this case from the radical wing of the Italian post-autonomy in Turin:

From my point of view I don't think it is a weight, I think that that stuff, the 1970s, the clashes, the conflicts, I think it is useful to me from a point of view of method, of teaching. It is also true that the stories of the battles in the streets, the stories of the spaces, the most different stories that we were told are fascinating, but from a personal point of view I think that that wave should serve us as the baggage we carry to improve ourselves, and that is useful to us from a point of view of method.⁴⁵⁰. (115)

The first interesting element of this quotation is that the activist refuses to identify the symbolic association with a certain past as a weight. He claims that the past (a specific past, that he identifies with 'the 1970s, the clashes, the conflicts', and later another quotation will elaborate on this) is 'useful', as a resource for activism. But what exactly is *useful*, in the 'stories' from the 1970s? The 'method'. This is a reference that resonates with what the previous activist in Padua said about the 'style of militancy'. What these activists claim, in respect to the past of the political area to which they belong, is a continuity in terms of approach, even in different conditions. They acknowledge that things have changed since the 1970s, but what remains 'useful' is the 'method', the 'style of militancy', the point of view that they apply to a changing reality. The choice to reclaim a 'method', a 'style', from the 1970s, is a choice of symbolic appropriation of the past. What is particularly interesting is the picture that these

⁴⁵⁰ '[D]al mio punto di vista non credo sia un peso, creo che quella roba lì, gli anni '70, gli scontri, i conflitti, penso ci sia utile e sia utile a me da un punto di vista come dire di metodo, di insegnamento. È anche vero che le storie delle battaglie di piazza, le storie degli spari, le storie più diverse che ci sono state raccontate sono affascinanti, però da un punto di vista personale penso che quell'ondata ci debba servire come bagaglio che ci portiamo per migliorarci e che c'è utile da un punto di vista di metodo.'

activists are painting: on the one hand there is an evolving reality, there are changing times, there are different waves of mobilisation that involve different people in different contexts, involving people who have no understanding of what happened before; on the other hand there is a continuing story, a permanent presence, that persists and remains beyond every wave of mobilisation and provides militants with a 'method' or a 'style' that can be applied on every occasion. Once again, for militants of organised groups, and in particular for those for whom the university is not the only field of action, like the activists of social centres, waves of mobilisation are seen as stages of a long trajectory, as events along a long path, as something that happens in a long history. Movements are the contingent element of collective action, while the organisational layer of collective identity, the sense of belonging to a movement area, provides the 'method', based on the previous experience of the group, to approach it.

11. The lighter the better: the strategic exploitation of the others' inherited constraints

Memory, translating into identity, determines the way in which movement areas arrive at the beginning of a wave of mobilisation. Memory and identity work, as I have explained, can help to reduce the weight of the past, enhancing innovation and favouring coalitional work. But memory and identity work do not stop at the doors of a wave of mobilisation. Activists go on facing identity dilemmas and memory-related challenges throughout the development of the movement. They find themselves both constrained within identity and memory-related borders and they tend to produce and construct new ones. An interesting example is represented by the story of the political collectives inside the department of political science of the University of Turin during the Wave of 2008, as recalled by an activist:

There was a collective in the department of political science. In the first year it was very broad, there were people from the Sinistra Giovanile, people from the Autonomy, etc., while in the second year it adopted a more defined identity. In the first year, it was a structure focused only on mobilisation, and, when the mobilisation declined, it died. The second year, it never went beyond five members, because of a too strict identity..⁴⁵¹ (I14)

⁴⁵¹ 'C'era un collettivo a scienze politiche, che il primo anno era molto ampio, e c'era gente della Sinistra Giovanile, a gente dell'Autonomia, mentre invece il secondo anno ha provato a darsi una dimensione più identitaria, però di fatto il primo anno era un contenitore solo finalizzato alla mobilitazione, e quando la

This story represents a clear example of a well-known phenomenon in social movement studies, the ‘extension dilemma’ between broad and vague identity borders, that tend to attract a larger part of the potential constituency but fail to sustain the activity in time after the peak of mobilisation, and a precise and strict definition of a group's identity, that motivates and incentivises core activists through bad times but limits the reach of the group. What is interesting in this particular story is the way in which activists reacted to this double failure, creatively playing with the identity borders they inherited in the attempt to innovate:

All the collectives apart from the Bonobo Collective were only structured to create mobilisation, they did not have any structure, while the collective to which I belonged had the peculiarity of having a charter of values, very concise and generic, in which, among the fundamental values, there was nonviolence. This, on the one hand, practically stopped those who did not recognise nonviolence from entering the collective, and, on the other hand, the name was particularly freakish, and therefore it excluded the old-style people, that absolutely refused to be part of a collective that had a freakish monkey as its symbol.⁴⁵²

(I14)

These activists find themselves with a need to form a departmental collective, during the mobilisation of 2008, in order to organise their action and coordinate with the students of other departments that already had political collectives. Therefore, they are in the position to innovate, to create something completely new with respect to what had been done before in their department. Nevertheless, the identity work they conduct is deeply informed by memory. In fact, they need to orientate their action in a heavily politicised environment, densely populated with existing symbols and identities inherited from previous waves of mobilisation. These constraints, as is often the case, enhance their creativity and their capacity for innovation. Their goal is to build a

mobilitazione è scemata con l'autunno è un pochettino morto lì e l'hanno successivo non è mai riuscito ad andare oltre alla 5 persone, per via di un'impostazione molto identitaria in cui non si riusciva a far molto'.

⁴⁵² ‘Tutti i collettivi tranne il collettivo Bonobo erano semplicemente finalizzati alla creazione di mobilitazione, non avevano alcuno schema, invece il collettivo di cui io facevo parte aveva la particolarità di avere una carta valori molto stringata e generica in cui tra i valori fondamentali c'era quello della nonviolenza, cosa che impediva sostanzialmente l'ingresso di coloro che non riconoscevano la nonviolenza da un lato, e dall'altro il nome, che era particolarmente freakettone escludeva tutto ciò che possiamo definire il mondo particolarmente vetero che si rifiutava assolutamente di comparire in un collettivo che aveva come emblema una scimmia freakettona.’

collective with broad and vague identity borders, in order to attract as many of the unpoliticised students that are potentially interested in participating in the Wave as possible, but at the same time they want to exclude some potential members, in particular those that, in the previous experiences, had carried in the collective symbols and identities that were considered too heavily charged with history and too problematic for the potentially broad constituency of the collective. In order to free themselves of these heavy identities, the founders of the new collective try a peculiar strategy: they build, through identity work, an anti-identity shield; they set the identity borders of the collective in a fashion that excludes certain problematic identities, that are those most charged with memory. First, they write a founding charter in which nonviolence is defined as a fundamental principle: with this choice, they are playing with the inherited taboos of the post-autonomous area, that, as I have explained before, does not allow to publicly renounce the possibility of violent action, even if there is no strategic desire to use violence, because of the metonymical relationship between violence and radicality. Even in a context in which the possibility of using violent forms of action has never been proposed by anyone whatsoever, imposing the principle of nonviolence aims to exclude those, whose area-specific collective memory, whose inherited stock of identity-related symbols, prescriptions and proscriptions, prohibits to exclude violence from the repertoire of action. The memory-related constraints of others become tools that activists can use strategically.

Furthermore, they choose as the name and symbol of the collective the bonobo, a species of monkey generally known for its altruism, compassion, empathy, kindness, patience, and sensitivity, for the absence of social hierarchies, for the higher social status of females, for its free and polyamorous sexual behaviour. In this way, according to our source, the activists aimed to exclude those ‘particularly *vetero*’, as an abbreviation of ‘*veterocomunisti*’, ‘old-style communists’, who would never have accepted having their political activity defined and represented by an queer anarchist monkey. Once again, activists are strategically playing with the constraints that memory is imposing on others, exploiting their limits to marginalise them politically. On this particular occasion, being freer than others of constraints that are inherited from the past means being able to move more nimbly in a densely populated symbolic environment, using the others' limits against them.

12. 'There and back again': mobilisation as the context of change

The theme of the movement areas represented as the bearers of continuity with the past and mobilisation as the chance for change and innovation has already come up throughout this chapter, repeatedly proposed by activists. This is probably a schematic, stereotypical and oversimplified representation of the actual dynamics that take place in collective action. In fact, as we have seen in previous sections, the same activists also mention cases in which innovation has taken place inside organised groups before the beginning of a wave of mobilisation (i.e. the changes inside the post-autonomous groups in Italy just before the Wave of 2008, or the abandonment of the 'Karl Marx' collective by some students in Madrid just before the peak of the anti-Bologna mobilisation), and cases in which strategic choices that broke away from existing tradition, in the midst of mobilisation, were proposed by activists participating in movement areas (i.e. the path and form of the demonstration of 22 December 2010 in Rome).

Nevertheless, the capacity of a massive wave of mobilisation to impact on the forms, content and symbols of the political actors that take part in it, is testified by other quite clear examples provided by activists. The experience of massive mobilisation, for those usually committed to sustaining protest with continued action that seldom involves big numbers, tends to be surprising and fascinating, as a Neapolitan activist summarises in reference to the first episodes of the Wave of 2008:

We immediately understood that something was different, something had changed.⁴⁵³
(I111)

As we have already seen, this is the typical point of view of politicised student activists about the mobilisation of people that have never been seen participating in protest events. The presence of what activists tend to call 'normal students' or 'new people' marks a visible difference between the ordinary situation and a phase of mobilisation. This change in the field of action favours the experimentation of innovations, as another Neapolitan activist explained:

In 2008 [...] there was a constituting moment, also from the point of view of the political

⁴⁵³ 'Capimmo subito che qualcosa era diverso, qualcosa era cambiato.'

culture of those that were mobilising. Nobody came, or, at least, only a part, that was too small to determine something, came from a previous political culture, and therefore we addressed the university as an issue in the most non-ideological⁴⁵⁴ way possible, really choosing step by step which were the forms and the languages that then gradually started belonging to you more and more, and you understood it in the square, you understood it in the assemblies [...], which were the languages, the forms of action, the thing on which to build organised paths. ⁴⁵⁵ (113)

The presence of a vast majority of people that ‘do not come from a previous political culture’, that are free from the constraints of memory, enables the possibility of ‘addressing the university as an issue in the most non-ideological way possible’, of experimenting ‘step by step’ practices, languages, strategies. This reconstruction allows us to problematise, and to render in a more articulate way, the dynamic relationship between movement areas and mobilisation as far as innovation is concerned. On the one hand mobilisation, with the presence of new activists without previous experience, provides the ground for innovation, and, on the other hand, politicised and experienced activists, belonging to movement areas, experiment in this context the innovations that have been elaborated. The interaction between different identities and between the presence and the absence of memory, creates the conditions to develop and experiment with new ideas and practices, and facilitates and accelerates, in the common work, paths of innovation that had been developing in close and limited circles. There is a collective learning process, in which knowledge does not mechanically descend from those who carry the baggage of experience and memory to those who do not, but rather is shared through debate and common action.

The participation in the movement is an experience of change, for those who arrive without any political experience as well as for those who are part of a long trajectory. Political groups and politicised activists enter the phase of mobilisation, live through it, and come out of it having undergone a process of change that challenges the inherited

⁴⁵⁴ Here the activist uses the word “laico”, that literally means “laic, secular”, independent from religious dogmatism, but is commonly used in an extended way, in the political language, as testified by the Treccani Dictionary, to indicate “people, groups, movements, attitude [...] autonomous from any kind of ideological dogmatism”.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Nel 2008 [...] era un momento costituente anche dal punto di vista della cultura politica di chi si andava mobilitando. Nessuno veniva, o meglio un pezzo troppo piccolo per determinare qualcosa veniva da una cultura politica precedente, per cui ci si avvicinava al tema dell’università in una maniera assolutamente laica, scegliendo veramente passo dopo passo quali erano le forme e i linguaggi che poi piano piano iniziavano ad appartenerti di più, e lo capivi in piazza, lo capivi nelle assemblee [...], i linguaggi, le pratiche di piazza, le cose su cui scegliere i percorsi organizzati.’

identities they had before. When an intense phase of participation and conflict ends, it does not leave the field in the same condition of before. The local social movement landscape tends to be significantly transformed by intense phases of collective action. This is the way in which a Neapolitan activist reconstructs the experience of the Wave of 2008:

2008, in my opinion, brought a new wave of militants. [...] Those experiences [the Wave and the struggle on the waste-management emergency] trained a new generation of comrades, very different from those of the 1990s and 2000s. In my opinion the Wave had the effect of a tidal wave on the collectives, it inflated them, and some of them exploded. [...] We, from 2010 on, made a political choice. After 14 December we came back to Naples and decided to occupy a space, to start back from the political subject that had caused 14 December, because, in our opinion, it had given a clear indication. We started from outside any framework, because we were having a new experience, even without any kind of link with other old experiences. We said, in our total autonomy: 'Now we put into practice the things we've said'.⁴⁵⁶ (I11)

After the end of the wave of student mobilisation, in December 2010, this group of student activists at the University 'L'Orientale' in Naples, that had entered the movement with a strong link with the post-autonomous social centre Insurgencia, feels 'out of any scheme', 'without any sort of ties linking us to other old experiences', free to experiment new paths. The geography of their movement area does not represent the reality they experienced in the context of mobilisation. They will break their connection with the social centre, occupy their own place, start a new story of participation and action in the city.

Another group of students, also in Naples (in the University 'Federico II') and also part of the post-autonomous area, makes a different but equally interesting choice for the purposes of this work. They will join the Insurgencia social centre, but with the feeling, at least from their point of view, of changing its history, of bringing to that already

⁴⁵⁶ 'Il 2008 secondo me ha portato una nuova ondata di militanti. [...] quelle esperienze là [l'Onda e le lotte sull'emergenza rifiuti] hanno formato una nuova generazione di compagni, molto diversi da quella degli anni '90 e anche 2000, secondo me l'Onda ha fatto proprio da mareggiata rispetto ai collettivi, cioè li ha ampliati tantissimo e molti collettivi sono proprio scoppiati. [...] Noi nello specifico dal 2010 in poi abbiamo proprio fatto una scelta politica. Noi dopo il 14 dicembre siamo tornati qua a Napoli e abbiamo deciso di occupare uno spazio, di ripartire da questo soggetto, quello che aveva fatto il 14 dicembre, perché secondo noi aveva dato un'indicazione chiara, siamo partiti proprio fuori da qualsiasi schema, perché eravamo una nuova esperienza, anche senza alcun tipo di legaccio con altre esperienze vecchie, abbiamo detto, nella nostra totale autonomia "noi adesso mettiamo in pratica tutte le cose che ci siamo detti."

existing trajectory new ideas and new practices, the new identity they had developed during the student mobilisation:

Also the students that went to join pre-existing autonomous organisations, changed those organisations. In our case, after the Wave we joined a social centre that had existed since 2004, that had already done a cycle of struggles, that had shared with us the anti-garbage dump struggle in Chiaiano in 2008. But when we took the challenge to participate in a pre-existing network dynamic, that dynamic changed. It didn't happen that those who came from the Wave adjusted to something that pre-existed: our entry changed that reality and even produced a new cycle of its history⁴⁵⁷. (I12)

The tension between past and future, between the history that brought them to where they are and that made them the way they are, and the possibilities of innovation and change they explored during the accelerated, intense and tremendously collective time of mobilisation, structures the field of action of activists, both at the individual and at the collective level.

⁴⁵⁷ 'Anche gli studenti che andavano a confluire in organizzazioni autonome preesistenti, quelle organizzazioni le hanno cambiate. Nel nostro caso, noi dopo l'Onda siamo andati incontro a un centro sociale esistente già dal 2004, che aveva fatto già un ciclo di lotte, che aveva condiviso con il presidio di Chiaiano la lotta anti-discarica proprio nel 2008, ma quando poi ci siamo messi in gioco in una dinamica di rete organizzata pre-esistente, quella dinamica è cambiata. Non è che chi veniva dall'Onda si è adeguato a qualcosa di pre-esistente, il nostro ingresso ha cambiato quella realtà fino a portare a un nuovo ciclo di quella realtà.'

Chapter 9 - Conclusions

1. Collective memory and social movements

This thesis represents an attempt to bridge two central issues of contemporary social science: social movements and collective memory. This is even more necessary now than in 2009, when I started planning this work. In times of crisis, not only of the global economic system, but of the very foundations of legitimacy of the public institutions that are supposed to handle it, protests are once again filling the streets and the squares of Europe, and some of their components are even doing something that a few years ago would have been considered tremendously unfashionable: taking power. Movements are seen, once again, as the carriers of the future, as the symbols of everything new and unprecedented, as the bearers of a wave of innovation able to reconstruct our societies and, hopefully, for the better.

From my point of view as a researcher and activist, this is one more reason to look at movements in terms of their relationship with the past. If we, as social movement scholars, are not interested simply in celebrating the presence of massive numbers of people in the squares – something that provides attention and saliency to our research – but rather we really aim to investigate the reasons that bring people to the squares, then any chance to widen the temporal lens of our analysis is welcome. The study of collective memory is not the answer to the problem of historicising and providing temporal perspective to social movement studies. But if we consider that the most recent wave of anti-austerity mobilisation in Greece started with a banner (the famous ‘Peoples of Europe rise up’) unfurled in front of the Parthenon on the Acropolis hill, and culminated with World War II veteran and Resistance hero Manolis Glezos facing tear gas and riot police on the front line of a demonstration, and finds an institutional outcome in the election of a new prime minister who, on his first day in office, pays homage to a monument to victims of the Nazi occupation, it is difficult to deny the omnipresence of symbols coming from the past in contemporary protests and the historical embeddedness of present-day collective action.

This work aims to contribute to this effort, drawing on both the social movement and the collective memory literature and situating the analysis in the context of the Italian and Spanish student movements and of their relationship with their 1960s and 1970s

antecedents. It is not an isolated effort: a limited but increasing number of researchers are engaging in what is becoming a small but productive field of study. The goal of this thesis is to participate in this collective endeavour by trying to innovate the field at least through two specific choices: on the one hand, the choice to focus both on the media representations of the past and on activists' memories aims to provide a more complex and dynamic account of the collective memory of past mobilisation; on the other hand, the choice not to stop at the analysis of the syntax and semantics of memory, but rather to enter the field of pragmatics, of the actual impact that memory has on the strategic choices of movements, might open new opportunities of research in the understanding of the cultural structure of strategic action. In section 2, I will briefly summarise the main outcomes of this work in respect to the field of memory studies, in section 3 I will do the same in respect to the field of social movement studies and in section 4 I will propose some open issues for further research.

2. Memory: a complex repertoire and plural repositories

The field of study on memory have been gradually but significantly evolving over the last two decades. The traditional segmentation of the field still persists, and collective memories still tend to be studied in sociology departments in the US, cultural studies departments in the UK, literature departments in Germany and history departments in France and Italy. Nevertheless, disciplinary borders have been increasingly trespassed by scholars, thanks to the effort of convergence promoted by conferences, journals, and book series. This process has made possible, if not the construction of a real shared research agenda throughout the whole community of researchers working on memory-related issues, at least some common steps forward, which are transversally visible throughout the enormous academic literature on memory produced after 1989. Although memory studies are still, as Olick and Robbins wrote in 1998 'a nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise' (106), the notion of memory as something socially constructed and inherently plural and contentious, subject to processes of contestation 'from above and below, from both centre and periphery' (Olick and Robbins 1998: 126) is now part of the stock of assumptions shared by every social researcher who approaches this field. If memory, in the Halbwachsian tradition, is collective in so far as it is produced in 'social frameworks', in the context of social groups structured by social relationships, then a society composed of multiple groups

and multiple belongings produces a plural, and often contested and contentious, memory of the past. Representations of the past produced and reproduced in the public sphere are the result of 'memory work' (Zelizer 1995: 226; Schwartz 1996: 911) conducted by 'mnemonic agents' (Peri 1999: 106) that pursue strategic goals and projects and are constrained by path-dependencies and by the limited malleability of the historical material, which makes different mnemonic projects differently apt to succeed in impacting the public sphere (Spillman 1998; Jansen 2007).

This thesis is placed in this context, in the attempt to contribute to the research agenda that these considerations implicitly propose: if memory is socially constructed through the work of social actors, then how do these actors work? From where do they draw the symbolic material on which they work? How do narratives and representations of the past travel in time? Who carries them, and how does the nature of the carrier influence the audience?

The basic idea of this work is to analyse memory (in particular the memory of a contentious past, the 1960s and 1970s) in two different contexts: the media and contemporary activism. This choice allows the analytical view to be widened beyond the usual limits of research on this topic, and experimenting with a comprehensive approach that looks at memory and at its dynamics, from a Halbwachsian perspective, in different 'social frameworks'. The structural constraints of research work mean that no approach is comprehensive enough: the print media and activists' accounts are not the only social frameworks in which the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s is represented and remembered. Nevertheless, focusing on the media as the 'master arena' of the public sphere (Gamson 2004: 243) and on contemporary activists provided me with two fundamental contexts in which I had the possibility to reconstruct the different representations of the past. The analytical comparison of these representations constitutes one of the core elements of this work, because it has allowed me to identify analogies and differences between the images of the past that emerge from the two contexts, and, thus, to assess to what extent the media works as a social framework of memory for student movement activists.

Furthermore, the media analysis has been conducted on a forty-year-long time span, in order to avoid essentialising one specific representation of the 1960s and 1970s, and, instead, to consider the narratives of the past in their historical evolution. This attempt resonates with Elizabeth Jelin's considerations on the need to historicise memory, in the sense of studying its mechanisms and putting them in a historical context and in

diachronic analysis, in order to face the dilemma between ‘presentism’ (the tendency to flatten the construction of memory on the deterministic role of the present) and ‘taxidermism’ (the idea that only some limited and predetermined representations of the past are possible) (Jelin 2003: 52-53).

Through this analysis, I have developed a conceptualisation of the relationship between social actors (in this case, social movements) and collective memories based on two different concepts: repertoire of memory, and repository of memory. This double definition is needed to account for the double nature of memory: memory is the act of remembering and what we remember, it is a process and it is a thing, it is a set of practices and a set of materials that are reproduced in these practices and act as objectified carriers of the past. The concept of *repertoire of memory* refers to the active element of mnemonic processes, and I defined it as the set of mnemonic practices that social actors put in place in reference to the past, while the concept of *repository of memory* refers to the passive element of mnemonic processes, and I defined it as the set of products, both implicit and explicit, formal and informal, symbolic and material that act as objectified carriers of the past.

The interaction between this conceptualisation and the analysis of the empirical material has proved fruitful: in fact, the presence of analogies and differences between the representations of the past identified in the media analysis and those reconstructed in activists’ memories is congruent with the idea of activists being equipped with a pluralistic repertoire of mnemonic practices that allows them to access different repositories. The mass media, thus, becomes only one of these repositories, with a specific centrality, that explains the significant consonance between the representations of the past identified in newspaper articles and those proposed by activists, but unable to cover the whole set of images of the past that populates the public sphere. The presence of significant, even if limited, differences, between the representations of the 1960s and 1970s identified in the media analysis conducted in chapters 4 and 5 and those reconstructed in the interviews with contemporary activists that are analysed in Chapter 7, together with the clear group-specific and city-specific nature of such differences, suggest that an alternative repository of memory is situated in movement culture.

In the analysis of the reciprocal relationship and interaction between these two repositories of memory (the mass media and movement culture), the access to which constitutes a significant part of contemporary movements’ repertoire of memory, the

model that emerged is significantly more dynamic and dialectic than the traditional accounts based on the juxtaposition of official state-controlled memory and resistant popular memory as two monolithic blocks (Olick and Robbins 1998). The analysis of the activists' accounts seems rather to resonate with the model of public discourse proposed by Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rucht (2002), with the public sphere represented as being constituted by many different forums, among which the mass media has the peculiarity of being accessed also by the actors that populate other forums. Social movements participate in the mass media forum, and, on the other hand, movement culture is dynamic, plural and permeable and needs to be analysed in its temporality, in its internal composition and in its relationship with other repositories. This model might also prove fruitful for analysis in other fields of memory studies.

Furthermore, conceptualising movement areas as 'mnemonic communities' (Zerubavel 1996), as the social groups in which 'mnemonic socialisation' takes place, means to acknowledge an active role of movements, and of social actors in general, in mnemonic processes. The analysis of the active role of social actors in mnemonic processes, recognising their agency instead of treating them only as a passive audience of messages arriving from the past, is one of the core elements of the current debate in memory studies. In particular, the conceptualisation of the repertoire of memory represents a step in the direction of a 'sociology of mnemonic practices' (Olick and Robbins 1998: 105), that focuses on the set of practices with which social actors participate in social mnemonic processes.

Finally, this thesis enters a partially unexplored territory for memory studies, that of the pragmatics of memory, attempting to analyse the impact of the past in current collective action. To analyse memory in action means to widen the repertoire of memory beyond the practices that construct collective memory, including also the practices that movements put in place in order to deal with the strategic dilemmas that memory produces in their field of action. In the following section I will briefly summarise, among other things, my findings in this regard and their implications for the study of social movements.

3. Movements: an embedded history in identity, strategy and continuity

Mentioning collective memory in the context of the social research on contentious politics is not as unusual as it was only a few years ago. In particular, the increasing

focus on the symbolic dimension of collective action that has characterised the field in the last two decades has favoured the inclusion of memory in the analysis of protest and activism. Since the so-called ‘cultural turn’ of social movement studies, the interest towards collective memory and, in particular, its relationship with political contention has been regularly growing amongst scholars working on cases of participation and conflict. In this context, memory studies, and in particular the sociology of memory based on the seminal work of Maurice Halbwachs, have become a fundamental tool for the development of research on social movements. In particular, the literature on memory has proved increasingly able to provide useful insights on the symbolic construction of the reality in which collective action takes place, interpreting memory not as a mere mirror of past events but as the result of collective practices able to reveal insights into present ways of interpreting reality.

The relevance of memory in social movement studies tends to revolve around three key concepts, which have been part of my analysis in this thesis: identity, strategy and continuity.

The relationship between *identity* and memory is well known, and in fact the widespread interest in the processes of construction of collective identities, typical of the most recent scholarship on social movements has been the channel through which collective memory entered the study of social movements. The social construction of a collective identity is the process through which a group recognises the traits that make the members of that group part of a common ‘we’ and different from ‘them’. This process is shaped by cultural factors, some of which have already been acknowledged by the literature on social movements as the result of a visible influence of the past (Polletta 2004, Morris 2004), even if memories have rarely been the direct and primary object of the analysis of collective identity building processes in social movements. As Francesca Polletta and James Jasper wrote in 2001, ‘we still know little about the cultural building blocks that are used to construct collective identities’, and, in particular ‘we should learn more about how intellectuals and group leaders use nostalgia and other elements of collective memory to construct a past for a group’ (Polletta and Jasper 2001: 299).

I analysed the relationship between movements’ identities and their memories in Chapter 8, in particular in the concluding sections, from 6 to 12. Stuart Hall’s idea that ‘identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position

ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (Hall 1990: 225) is reflected in the words of most of the student activists I have interviewed. In particular, they tend to identify the heritage of the past in what Gamson calls the 'organisational layer' of the multi-layered identity of social movement activists. Movement areas and political groups are understood as the outcome of historical trajectories and political traditions and as the carriers of the weight of the past via the identity they have inherited and reproduce. Heavy and thick inherited identities are seen in general as a constraint to the freedom of strategic choices, and in particular as an obstacle to the coalitional work that is instrumental for the development of a movement and are often the object of identity work. Thus, identity work and memory work tend to overlap and partially coincide, especially in what I have called 'limited apostasy': the choice to downplay inherited identities in order to be freer and lighter and to be able to address a broader audience. This process represents the other side of the coin in respect to the 'identity appropriation process' (Snow and McAdam 2000:56) conducted by movements on pre-existing political structures: for every movement that appropriates a political identity, there is a carrier of that identity that agrees to make it available to a broader constituency, and, in this way, to transform it.

Furthermore, from the activists' accounts, a negative correspondence between the development of a wave of mobilisation and the presence of thick group identities inherited from the past emerges, with a double process: on the one hand, innovation processes and 'limited apostasies' in movement areas favour the emergence of a united mobilisation, and, on the other hand, the participation in the movement favours the convergence of organisational identities, enhancing apostasy. Different factors play a role in this negative correspondence, from generational changes to explicit choices by activists and groups, from the appeal of presenting a united front in order to address a wider constituency to the experiences of collective learning that characterise movement work. Apostasy, of course, has its limits, because inherited identities are often charged with high symbolic and emotional value, which pushes activists towards compliance more than towards apostasy. In my analysis, identity can be (and often is) the object of strategic use, and not only at the individual level, as observed by the literature focusing on the deployment of personal identity in the public sphere as a movement strategy (Bernstein 1997) and on the attempts to align individual and movement identity (Snow and McAdam 2000), but also at the collective level. Furthermore, other actors' inherited identities can also become the object of strategic work: actors can exploit the constraints

that memory imposes on others in order to marginalise them, exploiting the strategic advantage that a thinner identity often provides in addressing bystanders in a densely populated political environment. Interestingly, if movement areas and political groups are usually considered the carriers of the past in a wave of mobilisation, they also act in the opposite sense, not only by being frequently transformed by the experience of the movement, but also by carrying this transformative innovation outside the context of the movement, due to their capacity to participate in different social contexts.

These last references bring me to *strategy*. Memory is relevant for the study of social movements because it is one of the cultural factors that structure the environment in which collective action happens. I consider this thesis as an attempt to contribute to a quite widespread effort to shed light on how strategic fields and strategic choices are culturally and symbolically informed. In fact, as it has already been pointed out, a strategic approach to social movement studies, which has been proposed and promoted as an attempt to face the structural bias of a significant part of the literature and to point out the role of agency in collective action (Jasper 2004), risks being reduced to a comeback of game-theory based rational-choice models if it does not take into account culture, treating social actors as ‘strategic dupes’ (Polletta 2006: 27), and ends up hiding or even further denying the role of the agency of social movements and activists. If we understand culture as ‘the symbolic dimension of all structures, institutions, and practices (political, economic, educational, etc.)’ (Polletta 2004: 100), then we can try and investigate how memory, as a significant part of culture, both in movements and in society, contributes to structure the field in which social movement actors make their strategic choices.

In Chapter 8, in particular in sections 1 to 5, I have tried to draw a general sketch of the influence of memory on the strategic choices of activists that was visible in the interviews I conducted in Italy and Spain. The literature has already partially described the processes of appropriation of symbols referring to the past by social movements (Harris 2006, Jansen 2007). This work aims to contribute to broadening this analysis, involving a wider set of memories, a more articulated typology of forms of memory and a broader set of behaviours by movement actors. The categorisation proposed in Chapter 8 is based on the distinction between *explicit* memories (symbolic and discursive associations made in public to a recognisable past) and *implicit* (symbolic

references to the past that are embedded in the identity and in the repertoire of action of movement actors) and between the cases in which *memory* acts as a resource and those in which it acts as a *constraint*. The combination of these categories provides four different types of strategic choices that activists make. In fact, all the different labels I have proposed to identify these types do not refer to strategies, but to strategic choices, to strategic dilemmas. Cases of explicit memories that present themselves to activists as resources, for example, do not deterministically produce *appropriation* as a strategy: rather, they put actors in the position to choose between appropriating or not a certain symbol from the past. The same can be said in respect to *replication* (as the strategic choice proposed in cases of implicit memories that can act as resources), *compliance* (as the strategic choice proposed in cases of explicit memories that can act as constraints) and *obedience* (as the strategic choice proposed in cases of implicit memories that can act as constraints): activists are faced with the strategic dilemma of whether or not to adopt these strategies, and there is a strong agency component in such processes. Furthermore, the distinctions I have proposed, in particular the one between memories that act as a resource and memories that act as a constraint, are phenomenical, in the sense that they correspond to different ways in which a reality presents itself to an actor, not to a characteristic of that reality *in se*. Thus, movement work can act on that reality and change it. Creative innovation can transform a constraint into a resource, allowing an actor to jump from one cell of Table 8.1 to the next one, and, on the other hand, it can allow an actor to use someone else's constraint as a resource. The dynamics that can change the landscape described in Table 8.1, together with the analysis of the factors that can make the positive or the negative choice more likely than the other in each of the dilemmas I have proposed, need further research. What appears clearly enough in this work is that memory is a relevant component of the cultural structure that informs social movements' strategic choices. This happens not only through the appropriation of explicit memories as a resource for collective action, but also in various other forms, including the role of constraint that memory often assumes and the widespread presence of implicit memories, embedded in the movements' repertoire of action. Social movements act in a field of opportunities that is structured by many factors, some of which are historically embedded and charged with a clear heritage of the past. Their strategic agency is enabled and constrained by these factors, which produce dilemmas whose solution is often linked to contextual factors.

The third key element of the relevance of memory in social movements that I have tried to analyse in this work is *continuity*. This is probably the component of this thesis that is most strictly linked with my personal experience as an activist. In fact, the element of my experience as a militant that I have most rarely found reflected in the social movement literature is the role of activism beyond big waves of mobilisation. In fact, a significant part of social movement activists, and I count myself in this group, spends most of the time devoted to activism outside what we usually consider to be social movements.

Exceptions are known and relevant, but too often the analysis of collective action has been ‘putting the thunderbolt on its trial’, as Victor Hugo wrote about the French Revolution, instead of taking into account the ‘cloud that had been forming for the space of fifteen hundred years’. Focusing on massive protests and treating them as isolated events, as spontaneous outbursts born as if from immaculate conception is one of the most common biases of social movement research, that has been increasingly addressed by the scholarship with an admirable reflexivity in the last few years (Taylor 1989, McAdam 1995, Polletta 2006, Flesher Fominaya 2013, Flesher Fominaya 2014). In fact, the traditional tendency to focus more on the present than on the reconstruction of historical trajectories, representing movements as isolated occurrences, is increasingly contrasted by a growing interest towards movement continuities, in the attempt to develop a genealogical approach, aiming to understand contentious politics as accumulative processes in which every new cycle is partially shaped by previous movement activities.

This work aims to contribute to this effort, focusing on memory as one of the processes through which specific social actors ensure a certain continuity between different waves of mobilisation. To define these actors I used the concept of ‘movement areas’ (Melucci 1989: 70), that is part of a long line of elaboration on the topic, including, among others, ‘abeyance structures’ (Taylor 1989), ‘social movement communities’ (Buechler 1990, Staggenborg 1998), ‘free spaces’ (Polletta 1999), countercultures, subcultures and scenes (Bennett 1999, Martin 2009, Leach and Haunss 2009). Melucci’s theorisation is particularly relevant for this work, not only because it includes informal structures that go beyond the traditional concept of social movement organisation and cultural activities that are seldom considered central in the repertoire of contention, but also because it points out how ‘latency and visibility are two interrelated poles of collective action’ (Melucci 1989: 70).

In the previous section I have briefly summarised how movement areas work as mnemonic communities, competing and interacting with the mass media forum of the public sphere in the dialectic construction of public memory. Here what needs to be pointed out is how relevant this process is for understanding social movement continuity. Memory is one of the processes of continuity: movement areas, networks and spaces, as we have seen in Chapter 7, are often forms of memory, as the outcomes of previous mobilisation. In time, they act as objectified carriers of at least part of the time in which they were produced, becoming a repository of memory. In this way, they often end up enabling further mobilisation, and thus ensuring social movement continuity.

4. Proposals for a contextual analysis of mnemonic processes

This work has been geared towards one main idea: the attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between social movements and collective memories, including different sources (media material and interviews with activists) and different levels of analysis (the construction of memory, its reproduction and its impact on contemporary mobilisations). This justified the choice of focusing on two cases studies, in order not to sacrifice the breadth of the analytical lens or the depth of the analysis, in particular for an issue that is so densely full of connotations related to specific historical and cultural contexts.

This choice allowed me to produce quite significant results in terms of understanding the processes that have been analysed in this work and their conceptualisation. Much and more needs to be done in order to further operationalise their reciprocal relationship. For example, with regard in particular to the analysis conducted in Chapter 7 on repertoires and repositories of memory, once it is established that social movement actors are equipped with a complex repertoire of mnemonic practices that allows them to access different repositories of mnemonic products, how do we understand which factors influence the prevalence of one repository over another in respect to a specific audience? Why do some narratives win the battle of memory against others? In the concluding section of Chapter 7 I listed some of the factors that have emerged from the analysis of the interviews, but much more needs to be done in order to build a comprehensive typology of such factors and to assess their respective relevance in different contexts. In this section I will try to briefly sketch a proposal for further

analysis aiming at answering these questions.

In the analysis of the analogies and differences between the mass media representation of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s and the images of the past reproduced by activists that participated in the student movements between 2008 and 2011 in Italy and in Spain, I have found significant variation both between the two national cases and between different actors situated in the same national context.

The model I propose for further analysis is based on the assumption that, on the one hand, differences between national cases can be explained mainly through contextual factors related to the evolution of public memory, and in particular to the public representation of the 1960s and 1970s in the two countries. The presence of group-specific differences, on the other hand, needs to be addressed prevalently through the reference to actor-specific factors. In this section I will discuss these differences, list the factors that I consider relevant in their explanation and propose methods and directions for further analysis.

Concerning the differences emerging from the macro comparison between Italy and Spain already discussed in Chapter 7, they can be summarised as follows: the memory of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, in Spain, is weaker, less canonised and less homogeneous than in Italy.

First, the presence of the memory of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in contemporary activists, in Spain, is *weaker* than in Italy. There are less spontaneous references to the past, there is a less widespread habit to cite historical precedents, there is a lower level of knowledge of the history of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, there is a more homogeneous feeling of distance and difference of activists in respect to their 1960s and 1970s counterparts.

Second, the memory of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s reproduced by current activists in Spain is significantly *less canonised* than the one told by Italian activists. Though there is a recurrent reference to the “student opposition to Francoism”, it is much more generic and less detailed than the narrative presented by Italian activists. Italian activists tend to systematically repeat the same three-staged story, mentioning 1968, 1977 and the Pantera of 1990, while their Spanish counterparts do not possess a clear and recognisable story of their historical antecedents.

Third, the representation of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s by contemporary activists tends to be *less homogeneous* in Spain than in Italy. In fact, Italian activists tend to reproduce the same traits identified in the media analysis, in

particular the dichotomy between 1968-*counterculture* and 1968-*struggle* with the same traits already described by the literature, including the polarisation of the two narratives on 1968 and 1977. Spanish activists, instead, tend not to reproduce the recent tendency to the *sixty-eight-isation* of the representation of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, they do not share the same view on the legacy of the struggles of the past, reproducing, instead, group-specific narratives probably related with the different attitudes towards the political transition.

These three differences, in my hypothesis, are related, in different ways, to the different importance achieved by the memory of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the Italian and Spanish contexts. I argue that the more relevant role that these memories have in the Italian public sphere accounts not only for the first difference (Italian activists tend to remember this past more than the Spanish), but also for a significant component of the other two: in fact, the lack of a public discourse about the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s favours the absence of a recognisable canon and opens the way to heterogeneous accounts, more related to movement culture than to the mass-media forum. In this way, the relative weakness of representation of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the Spanish mainstream media forum of the public sphere does not only produce the three differences with Italy I have listed above, but also leaves greater space than it does in Italy to representations coming from the alternative repository of movement culture. Thus, Italian student activists of today remember more about their predecessors of the 1960s and 1970s than their Spanish counterparts, but their memory tends to be significantly more mass media-dependent. These processes have, obviously, much to do with the characteristics of the past to which people refer. The student movements of the 1960s and 1970s have, in Spain, a lower level of *commemorability* (Armstrong and Cragg 2007: 726) than they do in Italy. But if we think that ‘events are not inherently commemorable, but they become commemorable by being defined as such’ (Armstrong and Cragg 2007: 744), we have to look beyond events themselves and investigate the context in which commemoration takes place. The intrinsic relevance, and, thus, commemorability, of the Spanish student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in respect to their Italian counterpart is difficult to assess avoiding arbitrary considerations. What is possible is to analyse the past as it is represented in the public sphere, aiming at identifying the role of different factors in shaping this representation.

In order to analyse the evolution of the public discourse on the past in the two countries, it is helpful to refer to three factors that play a relevant role in this process: the availability of mnemonic material, the role of mnemonic agents, and the symbolic structure of public discourse.

The first of these factors is the availability of *mnemonic material* in the mass media forum of the public sphere. How much information on the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s does this repository of memory contain, in Italy and in Spain? A comprehensive quantitative analysis of all references to this past made by media outlets in the two national contexts would probably be useful to have a more complete assessment. Nevertheless, it can be reasonably argued, even with the data in our possession, that there is more mnemonic material on the student movements of the 1960s and the 1970s available in the Italian mass media repository than in the Spanish. This statement is supported by the analysis conducted in chapters 4 and 5, that show much more frequent references to the selected events in the Italian case than in the Spanish. Furthermore, the significant relevance of the 1960s and 1970s in the Italian public memory has been frequently underlined by the historiographical literature (Betta and Capusotti 2004, Galfrè 2008, De Luna 2009, Foot 2009); on the other hand, the debate on memory in the Spanish context has been traditionally much more centred on the 1936-1939 Civil War and its outcomes (Aguilar 2008).

Why is there more mnemonic material available on the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Italy than in Spain? If we do not focus on the intrinsic commemorability of the events, then the explanation is probably situated in the possibility, or lack thereof, that the representations of such events had to gain access to the mass media forum of the public sphere. In my view two historical barriers limited the representation of those events in the mass media forum in the Spanish public sphere and, in this way, limited the availability of mnemonic material related to them in the following years. The first element is Francoist censorship. The authoritarian setting in which the Spanish student movements of the 1960s and 1970s took place is relevant not only for its direct effects on mobilisation, but also for its impact on the availability of symbolic material in the public sphere for future commemoration. This consideration does not imply that the regime, limiting the immediate representation of the events in the mass media forum of the public sphere, was able also to erase them from memory: alternative forums can circulate symbolic material also in authoritarian contexts and transform it in a powerful mobilisation tool (Olesen 2013). And, in fact, in chapter 7 I have shown the resilience

of alternative representations of the past situated in the repository of movement culture. Nevertheless, the mass media forum of the public sphere remained, for many years, impermeable to narrative of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, mainly because of a second historical barrier: the master frame of the transition. As I have already reported in Chapter 5, oblivion, in particular in respect to the Civil War, but also to the struggles of the 1960s and 1970s and to their repression, was one of the foundations of the *ruptura pactada*. Movements of the 1960s and 1970s were not represented, in the mass media forum of the Spanish public sphere, for decades. The massive production of films, books, television shows, etc. that reproduces the story of the Italian student movement of the 1960s and 1970s does not have a Spanish counterpart, depriving current actors of the sufficient mnemonic material to develop almost any practice of commemoration or symbolic appropriation.

The second factor I believe ought to be taken into account in analysing the different centrality assumed by the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the Italian and Spanish public sphere is the role of *mnemonic agents*. The articles analysed in chapters 4 and 5 illustrate a quite clear difference in this respect: in the Italian context, the role of veterans is quite marginal and linked in particular with episodes connected with the *1968-struggle*, while *1968-counterculture* is often represented from the point the view either of current celebrities who happen to have been young at the time or directly of journalists themselves. This role of generational witnesses that journalist and celebrities interpret in the Italian context is not mirrored by any actor in the Spanish case. On the contrary, the memory of the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s, in the Spanish media, is reproduced almost exclusively by veterans. This is coherent with the general representation of the past in the two different countries emerging from the analysis: the Spanish student movement of the 1960s and 1970s is generally depicted as deeply political, following the narrative of the ‘student opposition to Francoism’, that, from this point of view, is more similar to the *‘68-struggle* than to the *‘68-counterculture*. The general politicisation of the narrative, both in the case of *‘68-struggle* and of the “student opposition to Francoism”, limiting the constituency of the movement to the people who took actively part in radical political actions, corresponds to a partial ownership of this narrative by the political actors who participated to the events to which it refers. On the other hand, a generational narrative, like *‘68-counterculture*, that does not refer to specific political events, but to a broad set of social processes, relates to a wider constituency, including journalists and celebrities that can act as generational

witnesses. Once again, it is likely that the political transition plays a double role in this process: on the one hand, directly, with the pact of oblivion implied in the *ruptura pactada*, incentivising potential generational witnesses not to refer to any movement-related aspect of the past, not even the less politicised ones; on the other hand, indirectly, with the political transition acting as a symbolic filter, generating an over-representation of the aspects of the past connected with direct anti-regime activity and an under-representation of countercultural traits. As noted in Chapter 5, the last few years have seen a tendency in the Spanish media towards a gradual reshaping of the narrative of the ‘student opposition to Francoism’, increasingly situating it in the framework of global 1968 and thus inserting in it generational traits and countercultural references. This process, still marginal, implies a visible role of certain mnemonic agents: un-politicised actors that reproduce aspects of the past that fit media criteria much more than radical political narratives and that appeal to a much broader audience. The third factor I suggest to take into account in explaining the different centrality achieved by the memory of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Italy and in Spain is the *symbolic structure of public discourse*. Other than the existence of representations of the past in the mass media forum of the public sphere and the presence of agents able to promote them, there is the need to analyse the reasons that favour the relative success or failure of such representations in respect to the public sphere and to the audience. Not only the mass media forum of the Spanish public sphere sees the presence of a small amount of mnemonic material on the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s and a different set of mnemonic agents than its Italian counterpart, but also, and crucially, the representations of the past relate in different ways with the symbolic structure of the mass media forum of the public sphere in which they are situated. In particular, I refer to the resonance between a specific narratives and media formats and to the legitimacy for collective action deriving from a specific institutional culture.

On the one hand, this has to do with the narrative criteria of the media: the more significant presence of generational and countercultural traits in the Italian representations of the past does not only, as previously argued, relate with a broader audience, but it also resonates with media expectations, providing human interest stories aiming to address readers on different grounds than political history. This aspect is lacking in the memory of the Spanish student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, thwarting its possibility of success. On the other hand, the Spanish public discourse of

the last few decades has been structured by the transition, making it quite hostile to movement-related stories. Many scholars have pointed out how the ‘culture of the transition’ (Martinez 2013), consisting in a ‘pro-consensus institutional culture’, according to which ‘social protest is an inadequate channel for demanding solutions from the authorities’ (Romanos 2015), favoured in the 1980s and 1990s the relative absence of social contention in the labour field (Pérez Díaz 1993; Fishman and Lizardo 2013) and the structural weakness of ‘new social movements’ (Laraña 1993; Ibarra 2005). The lack of legitimacy of social protest in the Spanish public sphere has definitely limited the possibility that narratives of radical political activism from the 1960s and 1970s achieve a central role within it. These two aspects together (the higher resonance with media criteria of ‘68-*counterculture* and the lack of legitimacy for movement-related stories in the Spanish institutional culture) contributed in limiting the possibilities of success of representations of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the Spanish media forum of the public sphere.

The three factors I proposed (availability of mnemonic material, role of mnemonic agents and symbolic structure of public discourse) are useful perspectives, in my view, to analyse and understand the differences between the representation of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the mass media forum of the public sphere in Italy and Spain.

To sum up, the analysis conducted in Chapter 7 shows that current student activists in Italy tend to have a strong memory of their antecedents of the 1960s and 1970s, but the nature of this memory (more canonised and homogeneous than its Spanish counterpart) shows a clear role of the mass media forum of the public sphere as the main repository of memory; on the other hand, Spanish activists tend to have a weak memory of the student protests that took place before the transition, but this memory has characteristics that show a more relevant role of the alternative repository of movement culture. All the factors I have taken into account in analysing these differences (the availability of mnemonic material, the role of mnemonic agents and the symbolic structure of public discourse) provide interesting explanations of this process, with an outstanding role of the political transition in limiting and shaping the memory of the past in present-day Spain for what regards the mass media forum of the public sphere.

These processes are mainly related to what I called the *semantics of memory*, but have

also visible outcomes on pragmatics, both in terms of resources and constraints. In fact, as I showed in Chapter 8, Italian activists tend to complain about the excessive weight of the past in the field in which their action take place, and, at the same time, to strategically use this significant role of the past to their advantage. Conversely, Spanish activists tend to look for a past to appropriate for their action, complaining about the lack of available material, and, at the same time, to enjoy the freedom of not having to constantly relate to heavy antecedents.

Conducting collective action in a field populated by ghost of the past poses challenges to activists and constrains their work, but, at the same time, provides the opportunity for the memory work I have described in Chapter 8. Organising protests in an environment that does not see a constant presence of celebrated movements from the past in the public sphere poses other challenges, because the lack of a familiar reference for collective action in the public discourse reduces legitimacy and space of action for movements, increases the distance between the memory (and, thus, the identity) of movement areas and that of the broader population that these area aim to address, marginalises movement discourse in the public sphere. In the Spanish case, alternative memories tend, in general, to persist more and to have a stronger effect on activists, but they do not permeate the public sphere as strongly as in the Italian case.

I have showed how the comparison between national cases is useful to point out the role of macro contextual factors in influencing the success of different mnemonic narratives in the public sphere, in particular with respect to the competition between the mass media forum and movement culture.

But not all differences are situated at the macro level of public discourse and can be explained by macro contextual factors. Comparisons at a different level, internal to each of the national cases I have analysed, can point out the role of different factors. In particular, group-specific differences in the relationship with the past can point out the role of actor-specific factors in these processes. The literature on social movements and memory has proposed the concept of *mnemonic capacity* (Armstrong and Cragg 2006) to identify the ‘skills and resources needed to create commemorative vehicle’ (Armstrong and Cragg 2006: 726). But what are the factors and conditions determining or, at least, influencing, the mnemonic capacity of a movement in respect to a certain past? In the next few paragraphs I will examine more in depth some of the factors that I have quickly listed in the concluding section of Chapter 7, adding some examples

from the analysis conducted in this thesis, as well as suggestions for further research on the topic.

Distance in time is quite easily understandable and the analysis that I have conducted provides sufficient grounds to consider it an effective factor. The clearest example, from this point of view, is the difference between the representations of the student movement of the 1989-1990 course (the so-called “Pantera”) and those of the 1960s and 1970s shared by current Italian activists: as I have showed in Chapter 7, contemporary student activists in Italy tend to repeat a quite canonised version of 1968 and 1977, transversal to political belonging, while the depictions of the Pantera are significantly more group-specific. This very clear observation suggests that in the case of the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, current activists draw mainly on the mass media repository of memory, that is shared and transversal to political groups, while, in the case of the Pantera, they refer mainly to mnemonic material that is reproduced in the repositories of memory related to the different movement areas. The main reasons behind this difference appears clearly to be the distance in time: events that are relatively close in time can be reproduced with a significant level of independence and self-reliance in movement areas that maintain a certain level of continuity, as it is the case for many of the currently-existing student groups in Italy, whose roots go back to the Pantera. The further back in time lays the past to which we refer, the more likely it is that activists do not find available mnemonic material in their movement areas and tend to draw on the mass media repository of memory.

Exceptions to this consideration are probably understandable through *organisational and cultural continuities*. The most striking cases are related to 1977 in Italy and to the transition in Spain. In fact, as I noted in Chapters 7 and 8, while generally activists tend to stick to a canonised and media-filtered representation of 1977, interviewees belonging to specific social centres (in particular in Turin and in Padua), who maintained a certain connection, both through the direct organisational continuity provided by the social centre and through the claim of a certain cultural heritage of the *Autonomia Operaia* of the 1970s, tend to propose a representation of 1977 quite different from others, showing that movement culture is able to reproduce relatively independent narratives of the past even more than 30 years after the events. A quite similar process has been identified in Chapter 7 with regard to the different attitudes towards the transition that characterise different student groups in Spain, and the effect that this difference has on the perception of continuity and discontinuity in respect to

the student movements of the 1960s and the 1970s: student activists belonging to a movement area that is close to the Communist Party and United Left tend to be less critical towards the political transition than, for example, students belonging to collectives close to the post-Trotskyist political area; the former tend to perceive their 1960s and 1970s counterparts as significantly closer than what the latter do. In this way, a group-specific difference is reproduced after 30 years. Organisational and cultural continuities systematically interact with distance in time, bending it: a certain past can be closer to some actors than to others, thanks to the privileged access provided by continuities. Thus, the stronger organisational or cultural continuity an actor can claim with a certain past, the more this actor will be able to reproduce alternative narratives in respect to that specific past, drawing more than others on the movement culture repository of memory and less on the mass media. This second factor poses some interesting challenges from the methodological point of view. While the different distance in time between the present and a certain past is unequivocally measurable, and therefore we can easily assess its effects, the level of organisational and cultural continuity needs to be empirically investigated, through qualitative interviews like the ones I have conducted, but also through an historical analysis of political trajectories, able to account for both types of continuity.

Another factor that I have met tangentially in the analysis of the different repositories to which current activists access in drawing their representations of the past is significantly more difficult to measure with the methods I have used in this thesis. In my view, in fact, mnemonic capacity depends also on the *institutional means of mnemonic agency*, that are the concrete instruments available to a specific movement area, or the actors that participate in it, to develop, reproduce and spread specific representations of the past. In Chapter 7, for example, I mentioned two books that partially explain some of the words of my interviewees. The words of a Roman activist, member of a collective of the post-Trotskyist area, echo, in the reference to the role of DP as a third force inside the Pantera, promoting horizontalism and participation, between the Communist Party and the Autonomy, the contents of a book, written by a veteran who belongs to his own political area and published by the publishing house of the same area. And more than one Barcelonian activists, especially those participating to the student union that is closer to the United Left area, testified a specific role of Francisco Fernandez Buey, veteran of the 1960s and 1970s and then professor in Barcelona, of his lectures and of his books, in reproducing a certain version of the

student movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The resilience of some alternative representations of the past in movement culture cannot be understood if we do not take into account the material aspects of this culture: veterans who become full professors, journalists with a militant past, publishing houses linked to a certain party, websites dedicated to certain memories, intellectuals who participate in TV shows, and so on. It is difficult to elaborate on this point and to operationalise this factor properly without having conducted an analysis of this aspect. Further research on the material aspects of cultural production in political areas might help in assessing the real impact of this factor.

Finally, a fourth actor-specific factor than influences mnemonic capacity is the *relative position in the field*. With this label, I identify the perception and self-perception of movement groups as central or extreme in their field of action. As I explained in Chapter 7, movement culture and mass media discourse are reciprocally permeable: movements participate in the mass media forum of the public sphere and activists are exposed to media representations of the past, that then they reproduce in movement culture. Some of the interviews I conducted give me the impression that there is a correlation between the position of a certain group in the political field and the level of permeability of the culture of that movement area. Groups that self-identify, and are identified by other, as addressing the vast majority of the students tend to have a movement culture that is much more permeable to media discourse, while groups identified and self-identify as addressing radically politicised niches of the student population, tend to preserve alternative representations of the past more strongly. This aspect, of course, has been marginally touched by the research work behind this thesis, and there is the need for further research, in particular through the use of participant observation, to clearly operationalise this factor and assess its impact on the processes under investigation.

5. Open questions

Those described in the previous section are probably only some of the factors influencing the commemorability of a certain past and the mnemonic capacity of a certain movements. My view is that the analysis conducted in this thesis provides solid grounds for supporting their decisive role, and opens the way for further analysis aiming to complete these typology and to operationalise it in order to test its explanatory

potential in different contexts and in respect to different cases.

Analogously, in Chapter 9 I have identified the strategic dilemmas that social movement actors have to face due to the impact of the memory of past mobilisations, constructing a typology of strategic choices. Why do certain actors choose one strategy rather than another? Which factors influence the agency of actors in such dilemmas? Further research might help to answer these questions.

Furthermore, the structural constraints of the research have significantly limited the width and depth of the material I have used. Regarding media analysis, for example, further research might add TV and the Internet to print newspapers, and assess eventual analogies and differences. As far as the interviews with activists are concerned, the layers of analysis in respect to memory, in particular in its relationship with identity and strategy, are far from having been exhausted in this work: the overwhelming prevalence of references to the role of movement areas and their relationship with waves of mobilisation made me focus primarily on these issues, but many other factors, from generational identities to biographical and family-based legacies, deserve to be analysed.

Moreover, the nature of this work did not allow me to account deeply enough for the huge set of contextual factors that play a role in most of the processes that I have analysed, from nation-specific to group-specific stories, traits and differences. I am positive that there will be other chances, for me and for others, to address these.

Finally, I hope that this work also takes on some significance for the many activists that have directly or indirectly contributed to it, and for the movements they participate in. In some cases, the analysis showed some interesting openings in terms of opportunities for their work, and hopefully these might be exploited in the future. In some cases, it is already happening, as in the cases of the hugely unexpressed potential for legitimisation that the symbolic appropriation of the student opposition to Francoism could provide in Spain: the 15-M movement has proved more efficient than the student movement, in this regard, in using memory in action.

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Interviews

I1: Interview with Rome-based activist, 1 February 2013, Rome.

I2: Interview with Turin-based activist, 10 February 2013, Pisa.

I3: Interview with Rome-based activist, 9 March 2013, Rome.

I4: Interview with Rome-based activist, 8 March 2013, Rome.

I5: Interview with Rome-based activist, 3 March 2013, Rome.

I6: Interview with Pisa-based activist, 24 March 2013, Rome.

I7: Interview with Rome-based activist, 15 April 2013, Rome.

I8: Interview with Florence-based activist, 24 April 2013, Florence.

I9: Interview with Padua-based activist, 29 April 2013, Rome.

I10: Interview with Naples-based activist, 19 May, Rome.

I11: Interview with Naples-based activist, 27 May 2013, Naples.

I12: Interview with Naples-based activist, 28 May 2013, Naples.

I13: Interview with Naples-based activist, 28 May 2013, Naples.

I14: Interview with Turin-based activist, 7 June 2013, Turin.

I15: Interview with Turin-based activist, 7 June 2013, Turin.

I16: Interview with Turin-based activist, 7 June 2013, Turin.

I17: Interview with Turin-based activist, 8 June 2013, Turin.

I18: Interview with Turin-based activist, 8 June 2013, Turin.

I19: Interview with Florence-based activist, 22 June 2013, Florence.

I20: Interview with Pisa-based activist, 22 June 2013, Pisa.

E1: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 5 October 2012, Barcelona.

E2: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 5 October 2012, Barcelona.

E3: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 8 October 2012, Madrid.

E4: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 9 October 2012, Madrid.

E5: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 9 October 2012, Madrid.

E6: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 9 October 2012, Madrid.

E7: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 10 October 2012, Madrid.

E8: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 10 October 2012, Madrid.

E9: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 10 October 2012, Madrid.

E10: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 11 October 2012, Madrid.

E11: Interview to Madrid-based activist, 13 October 2012, Madrid.

E12: Interview to Sevilla-based activist, 15 October 2012, Sevilla.

E13: Interview to Sevilla-based activist, 16 October 2012, Sevilla.

E14: Interview to Sevilla-based activist, 16 October 2012, Sevilla.

E15: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 18 October 2012, Barcelona.

E16: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 19 October 2012, Barcelona.

E17: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 19 October 2012, Barcelona.

E18: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 22 October 2012, Barcelona.

E19: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 22 October 2012, Barcelona.

E20: Interview to Barcelona-based activist, 24 October 2012, Barcelona.

Acknowledgments

It may seem ridiculous, at the end of a thesis on memory, but I find quite difficult to remember all the things that happened in these years and all the people who helped me complete this work. Thus, I will start with an apology, to all the people who deserve to be remembered and are forgotten.

I cannot forget the support that my supervisor provided me in these years, for sure. Donatella gave me advice, inspiration, opportunities and, above all, showed an admirable level of patience and confidence in me. Of this, I am grateful to her. I am grateful also to the Hanspeter Kriesi, Bill Gamson and Ron Eyerman for reviewing this thesis and helping me in the attempt to make it better and more complete.

When I came to Florence to start the doctoral programme at the EUI I was not completely aware of the choice I was making, leaving a modest but promising career as a local journalist in Veneto and deciding to dedicate myself to research. For this choice I am grateful above all to Fabrizio Tonello, who, following me during my master thesis made me discover a passion for research, and Stefania Milan, who, at a punk concert in the middle of the Padan Plan on Christmas 2008 convinced me that writing a Ph.D. was a good idea and that there was a quite peculiar place in Florence that was the right place to do it. I am still not completely sure that she was right, but her propaganda efforts were definitely successful. Since then, in particular in my first year, she has been a good friend and a stimulating reference, and I thank her for this.

That choice coincided, at least time-wise, with the beginning of another big adventure: in the same Summer of 2009 in which I moved to Florence, I was also starting to contribute to the construction to what would become Link-Coordinamento Universitario and the Rete della Conoscenza, now two fundamental components of the Italian student movement landscape. Especially in my first years, a significant part of my academic work was written on trains and on the benches of railway stations, during endless trips around the country attempting to build stronger and deeper connections between the people and the groups that were animating the Italian student life. I do not intend to argue for the absolute necessity of engaging in social and political activism if you want to study it. But I do know that those experiences, and the people with whom I shared them, some of whom I consider brothers and sisters, are somewhere in this thesis. If nothing else, they brought me in a world of experiences, possibilities and

horizons that I did not believe were available to someone from Vedelago.

In this thesis I argue for the role of communities in shaping people's mind and worldview. Many communities were important to shape my mind and my worldview, about the topics addressed in this thesis and many others. I thank the COSMOS people (and in particular Lorenzo Bosi, Alice Mattoni and Matteo Cernison) for the teamwork, the fellow researchers on collective action that I met around the world (in particular Priska Daphi, Paolo Gerbaudo, Eduardo Romanos, Marco Giugni, Katrina Uba, Laurence Cox, Cristina Flesher Fominaya, Maria Kousis and Sidney Tarrow) for the precious feedback and advice they provided me, and my colleagues and friends at the EUI and downtown (in particular Donagh Davis, Lorenzo Cecchi, Tommaso Giordani, Elena Iorio, Valentina Marcella, Giovanni Lista, Elisa Albano, Filippo Benfante, Mariaelena Fabris, Romain Bonnet, Markos Vogiatzoglou, Pietro Castelli, Caterina Froio, Frank O'Connor, Myrssini Antoniou, Kivanc Atak, Emre Bayram, Daniela Chironi, Tommaso Fattori and many others) for making these years worthy of being spent here and for providing a good reason, other than Fiorentina, to enjoy Florence. Many thanks also to Joseba Fernandez, Jorge Sola and Ines Campillo, without whose friendship and help in understanding the political field of the Spanish state and in establishing contacts with its protagonists, this work would have been much more difficult and poorer.

If I have a passion for the stories of the past, it is probably because my parents spent so much time and energy telling them to me. This thesis is dedicated to them, to my brother Giovanni, and to Elena and her incomprehensible obstinacy to choose every day to go on bearing with me.